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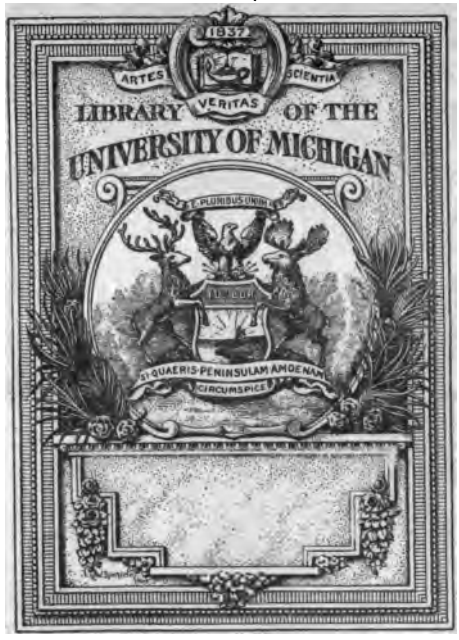
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THE

GIFTS OF THE CHILD CHRIST,

AND OTHER TALES.

BY

GEORGE MAC DONALD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE & RIVINGTON,
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STEPHEN ARCHER.

STEPHEN ARCHER.

STEPHEN ARCHER was a stationer, bookseller, and newsmonger in one of the suburbs of London. The newspapers hung in a sort of rack at his door, as if for the convenience of the public to help themselves in passing. On his counter lay penny weeklies and books coming out in parts, amongst which the *Family Herald* was in force, and the *London Journal* not to be found. I had occasion once to try the extent of his stock, for I required a good many copies of one of Shakspere's plays—at a penny, if I could find such. He shook his head, and told me he could not encourage the sale of such productions. This pleased me; for, although it was of little

consequence what he thought concerning Shakspere, it was of the utmost import that he should prefer principle to pence. So I loitered in the shop, looking for something to buy; but there was nothing in the way of literature: his whole stock, as far as I could see, consisted of little religious volumes of gay binding and inferior print; he had nothing even from the Halifax press. He was a good-looking fellow, about thirty, with dark eyes, overhanging brows that indicated thought, mouth of character, and no smile. I was interested in him.

I asked if he would mind getting the plays I wanted. He said he would rather not. I bade him good morning.

More than a year after, I saw him again. I had passed his shop many times, but this morning, I forget why, I went in. I could hardly recall the former appearance of the man, so was it swallowed up in a new expression. His face was alive, and his

behaviour courteous. A similar change had passed upon his stock. There was *Punch* and *Fun* amongst the papers, and tenpenny Shaksperes on the counter, printed on straw-paper, with ugly wood-cuts. The former class of publications had not vanished, but was mingled with cheap editions of some worthy of being called books.

"I see you have changed your mind since I saw you last," I said.

"You have the advantage of me, sir," he returned. "I did not know you were a customer."

"Not much of that," I replied; "only in intention. I wanted you to get me some penny Shaksperes, and you would not take the order."

"Oh! I think I remember," he answered, with just a trace of confusion; adding, with a smile, "I'm married now;" and I fancied I could read a sort of triumph over his former self.

I laughed, of course—the best expression of sympathy at hand—and, after a little talk, left the shop, resolved to look in again soon. Before a month was over, I had made the acquaintance of his wife too, and between them learned so much of their history as to be able to give the following particulars concerning it.

Stephen Archer was one of the deacons, rather a young one perhaps, of a dissenting congregation. The chapel was one of the oldest in the neighbourhood, quite triumphant in ugliness, but possessed of a history which gave it high rank with those who frequented it. The sacred odour of the names of pastors who had occupied its pulpit, lingered about its walls—names unknown beyond its precincts, but starry in the eyes of those whose world lay within its tabernacle. People generally do not know what a power some of these small *conventicles* are in the education of the world. If only as an outlet for the energies

of men of lowly education and position, who in connexion with most of the churches of the Establishment would find no employment, they are of inestimable value.

To Stephen Archer, for instance, when I saw him first, his chapel was the sole door out of the common world into the infinite. When he entered, as certainly did the awe and the hush of the sacred place overshadow his spirit as if it had been a gorgeous cathedral-house borne aloft upon the joined palms of its Gothic arches. The Master is truer than men think, and the power of His presence, as Browning has so well set forth in his "Christmas Eve," is where two or three are gathered in His name. And inasmuch as Stephen was not a man of imagination, he had the greater need of the undefined influences of the place.

He had been chief in establishing a small mission amongst the poor in the neighbourhood, with the working of which he occupied

the greater part of his spare time. I will not venture to assert that his mind was pure from the ambition of gathering from these to swell the flock at the little chapel; nay, I will not even assert that there never arose a suggestion of the enemy that the pence of these rescued brands might alleviate the burden upon the heads and shoulders of the poorly prosperous caryatids of his church; but I do say that Stephen was an honest man in the main, ever ready to grow honester: and who can demand more?

One evening, as he was putting up the shutters of his window, his attention was arrested by a shuffling behind him. Glancing round, he set down the shutter, and the next instant boxed a boy's ears, who ran away howling and mildly excavating his eyeballs, while a young, pale-faced woman, with the largest black eyes he had ever seen, expostulated with him on the proceeding.

"Oh, sir!" she said, "he wasn't troubling

you." There was a touch of indignation in the tone.

"I'm sorry I can't return the compliment," said Stephen, rather illogically. "If I'd ha' known you liked to have your shins kicked, I might ha' let the young rascal alone. But you see I didn't know it."

"He's my brother," said the young woman, conclusively.

"The more shame to him," returned Stephen. "If he'd been your husband, now, there might ha' been more harm than good in interferin', 'cause he'd only give it you the worse after; but brothers! Well, I'm sure it's a pity I interfered."

"I don't see the difference," she retorted, still with offence.

"I beg your pardon, then," said Stephen. "I promise you I won't interfere next time."

So saying, he turned, took up his shutter, and proceeded to close his shop. The young woman walked on.

Stephen gave an inward growl or two at the depravity of human nature, and set out to make his usual visits; but before he reached the place, he had begun to doubt whether the old Adam had not overcome him in the matter of boxing the boy's ears; and the following interviews appeared in consequence less satisfactory than usual. Disappointed with himself, he could not be so hopeful about others.

As he was descending a stair so narrow that it was only just possible for two people to pass, he met the same young woman ascending. Glad of the opportunity, he stepped aside with his best manners and said:

"I am sorry I offended you this evening. I did not know that the boy was your brother."

"Oh, sir!" she returned—for to one in her position, Stephen Archer was a gentleman: had he not a shop of his own?—"you

didn't hurt him much; only I'm so anxious to save him."

"To be sure," returned Stephen, "that is the one thing needful."

"Yes, sir," she rejoined. "I try hard, but boys will be boys."

"There is but one way, you know," said Stephen, following the words with a certain formula which I will not repeat.

The girl stared. "I don't know about that," she said. "What I want is to keep him out of prison. Sometimes I think I shan't be able long. Oh, sir! if you be the gentleman that goes about here, couldn't you help me? I can't get anything for him to do, and I can't be at home to look after him."

"What is he about all day, then?"

"The streets," she answered. "I don't know as he's ever done anything he oughtn't to, but he came home once in a fright, and that breathless with running, that I thought

he'd ha' fainted. If I only could get him into a place!"

"Do you live here?" he asked.

"Yes, sir; I do."

At the moment a half-bestial sound below, accompanied by uncertain footsteps, announced the arrival of a drunken bricklayer.

"There's Joe Bradley," she said, in some alarm. "Come into my room, sir, till he's gone up; there's no harm in him when he's sober, but he ain't been sober for a week now."

Stephen obeyed; and she, taking a key from her pocket, and unlocking a door on the landing, led him into a room to which his back-parlour was a paradise. She offered him the only chair in the room, and took her place on the edge of the bed, which showed a clean but much-worn patchwork quilt. Charley slept on the bed, and she on a shake-down in the corner. The room was not untidy, though the walls and floor were

not clean; indeed there were not in it articles enough to make it untidy withal.

"Where do you go on Sundays?" asked Stephen.

"Nowheres. I ain't got nobody," she added, with a smile, "to take me nowheres."

"What do you do then?"

"I've plenty to do mending of Charley's trousers. You see they're only shoddy, and as fast as I patch 'em in one place they're out in another."

"But you oughtn't to work Sundays."

"I have heard tell of people as say you oughtn't to work of a Sunday; but where's the differ when you've got a brother to look after? He ain't got no mother."

"But you're breaking the fourth commandment; and you know where people go that do that. You believe in hell, I suppose."

"I always thought that was a bad word."

"To be sure! But it's where you'll go if you break the Sabbath."

"Oh, sir!" she said, bursting into tears, "I don't care what become of me if I could only save that boy."

"What do you mean by *saving* him?"

"Keep him out of prison, to be sure. I shouldn't mind the workus myself, if I could get him into a place."

A place was her heaven, a prison her hell.

Stephen looked at her more attentively. No one who merely glanced at her could help seeing her eyes first, and no one who regarded them could help thinking her nice-looking at least, all in a shabby cotton dress and black shawl as she was. It was only the "penury and pine" that kept her from being beautiful. Her features were both regular and delicate, with an anxious mystery about the thin tremulous lips, and a beseeching look, like that of an animal, in her fine eyes, hazy with the trouble that haunted her mouth. Stephen had the good sense not to press the Sabbath question, and by degrees drew her story from her.

Her father had been a watchmaker, but, giving way to drink, had been, as far back as she could remember, entirely dependent on her mother, who by charing and jobbing managed to keep the family alive. Sara was then the only child, but, within a few months after her father's death, her mother died in giving birth to the boy. With her last breath she had commended him to his sister. Sara had brought him up—how she hardly knew. He had been everything to her. The child that her mother had given her was all her thought. Those who start with the idea "that people with nought are naughty," whose eyes are offended by rags, whose ears cannot distinguish between vulgarity and wickedness, and who think the first duty is care for self, must be excused from believing that Sara Coulter passed through all that had been *decreed* for her without losing her simplicity and purity. But God is in the back slums as certainly as

—perhaps to some eyes more evidently than —in Belgravia. That which was the burden of her life—namely, the care of her brother—was her salvation. After hearing her story, which he had to draw from her, because she had no impulse to talk about herself, Stephen went home to turn the matter over in his mind.

The next Sunday, after he had had his dinner, he went out into the same region, and found himself at Sara's door. She was busy over a garment of Charley's, who was sitting on the bed with half a loaf in his hand. When he recognized Stephen he jumped down, and would have rushed from the room; but changing his mind, possibly because of the condition of his lower limbs, he turned, and springing into the bed, scrambled under the counterpane, and drew it over his head.

"I am sorry to see you working on Sunday," Stephen said, with an emphasis that referred to their previous conversation.

"You would not have the boy go naked?" she returned, with again a touch of indignation. She had been thinking how easily a man of Stephen's social position could get him a place if he would. Then recollecting her manners, she added, "I should get him better clothes if he had a place. Wouldn't you like to get a place now, Charley?"

"Yes," said Charley, from under the counterpane, and began to peep at the visitor.

He was not an ill-looking boy — only roguish to a degree. His eyes, as black as his sister's, but only half as big, danced and twinkled with mischief. Archer would have taken him off to his ragged class, but even of rags he had not at the moment the complement necessary for admittance. He left them, therefore, with a few commonplaces of religious phrase, falling utterly meaningless. But he was not one to confine his ministrations to words: he was an honest man.

Before the next Sunday it was clear to him that he could do nothing for the soul of Sara until he had taken the weight of her brother off it.

When he called the next Sunday the same vision precisely met his view. She might have been sitting there ever since, with those wonderfully-patched trousers in her hands, and the boy beside her, gnawing at his lump of bread. But many a long seam had passed through her fingers since then, for she worked at a clothes-shop all the week with the sewing-machine, whence arose the possibility of patching Charley's clothes, for the overseer granted her a cutting or two now and then.

After a little chat, Stephen put the question:

"If I find a place for Charley, will you go to Providence Chapel next Sunday?"

"I will go *anywhere* you please, Mr. Archer," she answered, looking up quickly

with a flushed face. She would have accompanied him to any casino in London just as readily: her sole thought was to keep Charley out of prison. Her father had been in prison once; to keep her mother's child out of prison was the grand object of her life.

"Well," he resumed, with some hesitation, for he had arrived at the resolution through difficulties, whose fogs yet lingered about him, "if he will be an honest, careful boy, I will take him myself."

"Charley! Charley!" cried Sara, utterly neglectful of the source of the benefaction; and rising, she went to the bed and hugged him.

"Don't, Sara!" said Charley, petulantly. "I don't want girls to squash me. Leave go, I say. You mend my trousers, and *I*'ll take care of *my*self."

"The little wretch!" thought Stephen.

Sara returned to her seat, and her needle

went almost as fast as her sewing-machine. A glow had arisen now, and rested on her pale cheek: Stephen found himself staring at a kind of transfiguration, back from the ghostly to the human. His admiration extended itself to her deft and slender fingers and there brooded until his conscience informed him that he was actually admiring the breaking of the Sabbath; whereupon he rose. But all the time he was about amongst the rest of his people, his thoughts kept wandering back to the desolate room, the thankless boy, and the ministering woman. Before leaving, however, he had arranged with Sara that she should bring her brother to the shop the next day.

The awe with which she entered it was not shared by Charley, who was never ripe for anything but frolic. Had not Stephen been influenced by a desire to do good, and possibly by another feeling too embryonic for detection, he would never have dreamed

of making an errand boy of a will-o'-the-wisp. As such, however, he was installed, and from that moment an anxiety unknown before took possession of Stephen's bosom. He was never at ease, for he never knew what the boy might be about. He would have parted with him the first fortnight, but the idea of the prison had passed from Sara's heart into his, and he saw that to turn the boy away from his first place would be to accelerate his gravitation thitherward. He had all the tricks of a newspaper boy indigenous in him. Repeated were the complaints brought to the shop. One time the paper was thrown down the area, and brought into the breakfast-room defiled with wet. At another it was found on the door-step, without the bell having been rung, which could hardly have been from forgetfulness, for Charley's delight was to set the bell ringing furiously, and then wait till the cook appeared, taking good care however to

leave space between them for a start. Sometimes the paper was not delivered at all, and Stephen could not help suspecting that he had sold it in the street. Yet both for his sake and Sara's he endured, and did not even box his ears. The boy hardly seemed to be wicked: the spirit that possessed him was rather a *polter-geist*, as the Germans would call it, than a demon.

Meantime, the Sunday after Charley's appointment, Archer, seated in his pew, searched all the chapel for the fulfilment of Sara's part of the agreement, namely, her presence. But he could see her nowhere. The fact was, her promise was so easy that she had scarcely thought of it after, not suspecting that Stephen laid any stress upon its fulfilment, and, indeed, not knowing where the chapel was. She had managed to buy a bit of something of the shoddy species, and while Stephen was looking for her in the chapel, she was making a jacket for Charley. Greatly disappointed,

and chiefly, I do believe, that she had not kept her word, Stephen went in the afternoon to call upon her.

He found her working away as before, and saving time by taking her dinner while she worked, for a piece of bread lay on the table by her elbow, and beside it a little brown sugar to make the bread go down. The sight went to Stephen's heart, for he had just made his dinner off baked mutton and potatoes, washed down with his half-pint of stout.

"Sara!" he said solemnly, "you promised to come to our chapel, and you have not kept your word." He never thought that "our chapel" was not the landmark of the region.

"Oh, Mr. Archer," she answered, "I didn't know as you cared about it. But," she went on, rising and pushing her bread on one side to make room for her work, "I'll put on my bonnet directly." Then she checked herself, and added, "Oh! I beg your pardon, sir—

I'm so shabby! You couldn't be seen with the likes of me."

It touched Stephen's chivalry—and something deeper than chivalry. He had had no intention of walking with her.

"There's no chapel in the afternoon," he said; "but I'll come and fetch you in the evening."

Thus it came about that Sara was seated in Stephen's pew, next to Stephen himself, and Stephen felt a strange pleasure unknown before, like that of the shepherd who having brought the stray back to the fold cares little that its wool is torn by the bushes, and it looks a ragged and disreputable sheep. It was only Sara's wool that might seem disreputable, for she was a very good-faced sheep. He found the hymns for her, and they shared the same book. He did not know then that Sara could not read a word of them.

The gathered people, the stillness, the

gaslights, the solemn ascent of the minister into the pulpit, the hearty singing of the congregation, doubtless had their effect upon Sara, for she had never been to a chapel and hardly to any place of assembly before. From all amusements, the burden of Charley and her own retiring nature had kept her back.

But she could make nothing of the sermon. She confessed afterwards that she did not know she had anything to do with it. Like "the Northern Farmer," she took it all for the clergyman's business, which she amongst the rest had to see done. She did not even wonder why Stephen should have wanted to bring her there. She sat when other people sat, pretended to kneel when other people pretended to kneel, and stood up when other people stood up—still brooding upon Charley's jacket.

But Archer's feelings were not those he had expected. He had brought her, intend-

ing her to be done good to; but before the sermon was over he wished he had not brought her. He resisted the feeling for a long time, but at length yielded to it entirely; the object of his solicitude all the while conscious only of the lighted stillness and the new barrier between Charley and Newgate. The fact with regard to Stephen was that a certain hard *pan*, occasioned by continual ploughings to the same depth and no deeper, in the soil of his mind, began this night to be broken up from within, and that through the presence of a young woman who did not for herself put together two words of the whole discourse.

The pastor was preaching upon the saying of St. Paul, that he could wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren. Great part of his sermon was an attempt to prove that he could not have meant what his words implied. For the preacher's mind was so filled with the supposed para-

mount duty of saving his own soul, that the enthusiasm of the Apostle was simply incredible. Listening with that woman by his side, Stephen for the first time grew doubtful of the wisdom of his pastor. Nor could he endure that such should be the first doctrine Sara heard from his lips. Thus was he already and grandly repaid for his kindness; for the presence of a woman who without any conscious religion was to herself a law of love, brought him so far into sympathy with the mighty soul of St. Paul, that from that moment the blessing of doubt was at work in his, undermining prison walls.

He walked home with Sara almost in silence, for he found it impossible to impress upon her those parts of the sermon with which he had no fault to find, lest she should retort upon that one point. The arrows which Sara escaped, however, could from her ignorance have struck her only with their feather end.

Things proceeded in much the same fashion for a while. Charley went home at night to his sister's lodging, generally more than two hours after leaving the shop, but gave her no new ground of complaint. Every Sunday evening Sara went to the chapel, taking Charley with her when she could persuade him to go; and, in obedience with the supposed wish of Stephen, sat in his pew. He did not go home with her any more for a while, and indeed visited her but seldom, anxious to avoid scandal, more especially as he was a deacon.

But now that Charley was so far safe, Sara's cheek began to generate a little of that celestial rosy red which is the blossom of the woman-plant, although after all it hardly equalled the heart of the blush rose. She grew a little rounder in form too, for she lived rather better now,—buying herself a rasher of bacon twice a week. Hence she began to be in more danger, as any one

acquainted with her surroundings will easily comprehend. But what seemed at first the ruin of her hopes dissipated this danger.

One evening, when she returned from her work, she found Stephen in her room. She made him the submissive grateful salutation, half courtesy, half bow, with which she always greeted him, and awaited his will.

"I am very sorry to have to tell you, Sara, that your brother——"

She turned white as a shroud, and her great black eyes grew greater and blacker as she stared in agonized expectancy while Stephen hesitated in search of a better form of communication. Finding none, he blurted out the fact—

"—has robbed me, and run away."

"Don't send him to prison, Mr. Archer," shrieked Sara, and laid herself on the floor at his feet with a grovelling motion, as if striving with her mother earth for comfort. There was not a film of art in this. She

had never been to a theatre. The natural urging of life gave the truest shape to her entreaty. Her posture was the result of the same feeling which made the nations of old bring their sacrifices to the altar of a deity who, possibly benevolent in the main, had yet cause to be inimical to them. From the prostrate living sacrifice arose the one prayer, "Don't send him to prison; don't send him to prison!"

Stephen gazed at her in bewildered admiration, half divine and all human. A certain consciousness of power had, I confess, a part in his silence, but the only definite shape this consciousness took was of beneficence. Attributing his silence to unwillingness, Sara got half-way from the ground—that is, to her knees—and lifted a face of utter entreaty to the sight of Stephen. I will not say words fail me to describe the intensity of its prayer, for words fail me to describe the commonest phenomenon of nature: all I can

is to say, that it made Stephen's heart too large for its confining walls. "Mr. Archer," she said, in a voice hollow with emotion, "I will do *anything* you like. I will be your slave. Don't send Charley to prison."

The words were spoken with a certain strange dignity of self-abnegation. It is not alone the country people of Cumberland or of Scotland, who in their highest moments are capable of poetic utterance.

An indescribable thrill of conscious delight shot through the frame of Stephen as the woman spoke the words. But the gentleman in him triumphed. I would have said *the Christian*, for whatever there was in Stephen of the *gentle* was there in virtue of the *Christian*, only he failed in one point: instead of saying at once, that he had no intention of prosecuting the boy, he pretended, I believe from the satanic delight in power that possesses every man of us, that he would turn it over in his mind. It might have

been more dangerous, but it would have been more divine, if he had lifted the kneeling woman to his heart, and told her that not for the wealth of an imagination would he proceed against her brother. The divinity, however, was taking its course, both rough-hewing and shaping the ends of the two.

She rose from the ground, sat on the one chair, with her face to the wall, and wept helplessly, with the added sting, perhaps, of a faint personal disappointment. Stephen failed to attract her notice, and left the room. She started up when she heard the door close, and flew to open it, but was only in time to hear the outer door. She sat down and cried again.

Stephen had gone to find the boy if he might, and bring him to his sister. He ought to have said so, for to permit suffering for the sake of a joyful surprise is not good. Going home first, he was hardly seated in his room, to turn over not the matter but the

means, when a knock came to the shop-door, the sole entrance, and there were two policemen bringing the deserter in a cab. He had been run over in the very act of decamping with the contents of the till, had lain all but insensible at the hospital while his broken leg was being set, but, as soon as he came to himself, had gone into such a fury of determination to return to his master, that the house-surgeon saw that the only chance for the ungovernable creature was to yield. Perhaps he had some dim idea of restoring the money ere his master should have discovered its loss. As he was very little, they made a couch for him in the cab, and so sent him.

It would appear that the suffering and the faintness had given his conscience a chance of being heard. The accident was to Charley what the sight of the mountain-peak was to the boy Wordsworth. He was delirious when he arrived, and instead of showing any

contrition towards his master, only testified an extravagant joy at finding him again. Stephen had him taken into the back room, and laid upon his own bed. One of the policemen fetched the charwoman, and when she arrived, Stephen went to find Sara.

She was sitting almost as he had left her, with a dull, hopeless look.

"I am sorry to say Charley has had an accident," he said.

She started up and clasped her hands.

"He is not in prison?" she panted in a husky voice.

"No; he is at my house. Come and see him. I don't think he is in any danger, but his leg is broken."

A gleam of joy crossed Sara's countenance. She did not mind the broken leg, for he was safe from her terror. She put on her bonnet, tied the strings with trembling hands, and went with Stephen.

"You see God wants to keep him out of

prison too," he said, as they walked along the street.

But to Sara this hardly conveyed an idea. She walked by his side in silence.

"Charley! Charley!" she cried, when she saw him white on the bed, rolling his head from side to side. Charley ordered her away with words awful to hear, but which from him meant no more than words of ordinary temper in the mouth of the well-nurtured man or woman. She had spoiled and indulged him all his life, and now for the first time she was nothing to him, while the master who had lectured and restrained him was everything. When the surgeon wanted to change his dressings, he would not let him touch them till his master came. Before he was able to leave his bed, he had developed for Stephen a terrier-like attachment. But, after the first feverishness was over, his sister waited upon him.

Stephen got a lodging, and abandoned his

back room to the brother and sister. But he had to attend to his shop, and therefore saw much of both of them. Finding then to his astonishment that Sara could not read, he gave all his odd moments to her instruction, and her mind being at rest about Charley so long as she had him in bed, her spirit had leisure to think of other things.

She learned rapidly. The lesson-book was of course the New Testament; and Stephen soon discovered that Sara's questions, moving his pity at first because of the ignorance they displayed, always left him thinking about some point that had never occurred to him before; so that at length he regarded Sara as a being of superior intelligence waylaid and obstructed by unfriendly powers upon her path towards the threshold of the kingdom, while she looked up to him as to one supreme in knowledge as in goodness. But she never could understand the pastor. This

would have been a great trouble to Stephen, had not his vanity been flattered by her understanding of himself. He did not consider that growing love had enlightened his eyes to see into her heart, and enabled him thus to use an ordinary human language for the embodiment of common-sense ideas; whereas the speech of the pastor contained such an admixture of technicalities as to be unintelligible to the neophyte.

Stephen was now distressed to find that whereas formerly he had received everything without question that his minister spoke, he now in general went home in a doubting, questioning mood, begotten of asking himself what Sara would say. He feared at first that the old Adam was beginning to get the upper hand of him, and that Satan was laying snares for his soul. But when he found at the same time that his conscience was growing more scrupulous concerning his business affairs, his hope sprouted afresh.

One day, after Charley had been out for the first time, Sara, with a little tremor of voice and manner, addressed Stephen thus:—

"I shall take Charley home to-morrow, if you please, Mr. Archer."

"You don't mean to say, Sara, you've been paying for those lodgings all this time?" half-asked, half-exclaimed Stephen.

"Yes, Mr. Archer. We must have somewhere to go to. It ain't easy to get a room at any moment, now them railways is everywheres."

"But I hope as how you're comfortable where you are, Sara?"

"Yes, Mr. Archer. But what am I to do for all your kindness?"

"You can pay me all in a lump, if you like, Sara. Only you don't owe me nothing."

Her colour came and went. She was not used to men. She could not tell what he would have her understand, and could not help trembling.

"What do you mean, Mr. Archer?" she faltered out.

"I mean you can give me yourself, Sara, and that'll clear all scores."

"But, Mr. Archer—you've been a-teaching of me good things—— You *don't* mean to marry me!" exclaimed Sara, bursting into tears.

"Of course I do, Sara. Don't cry about it. I won't if you don't like."

This is how Stephen came to change his mind about his stock in trade.

PORT IN A STORM.

PORT IN A STORM.

"PAPA," said my sister Effie, one evening as we all sat about the drawing-room fire. One after another, as nothing followed, we turned our eyes upon her. There she sat, still silent, embroidering the corner of a cambric handkerchief, apparently unaware that she had spoken.

It was a very cold night in the beginning of winter. My father had come home early, and we had dined early that we might have a long evening together, for it was my father's and mother's wedding-day, and we always kept it as the homeliest of holidays. My father was seated in an easy-chair by the chimney corner, with a jug of Burgundy

near him, and my mother sat by his side, now and then taking a sip out of his glass.

Effie was now nearly nineteen; the rest of us were younger. What she was thinking about we did not know then, though we could all guess now. Suddenly she looked up, and seeing all eyes fixed upon her, became either aware or suspicious, and blushed rosy red.

"You spoke to me, Effie. What was it, my dear?"

"O yes, papa. I wanted to ask you whether you wouldn't tell us, to-night, the story about how you——"

"Well, my love?"

"—About how you——"

"I am listening, my dear."

"I mean, about mamma and you."

"Yes, yes. About how I got your mamma for a mother to you. Yes. I paid a dozen of port for her."

We all and each exclaimed *Papa!* and my mother laughed.

"Tell us all about it," was the general cry.

"Well, I will," answered my father. "I must begin at the beginning, though."

And, filling his glass with Burgundy, he began.

"As far back as I can remember, I lived with my father in an old manor-house in the country. It did not belong to my father, but to an elder brother of his, who at that time was captain of a seventy-four. He loved the sea more than his life; and, as yet apparently, had loved his ship better than any woman. At least he was not married.

"My mother had been dead for some years, and my father was now in very delicate health. He had never been strong, and since my mother's death, I believe, though I was too young to notice it, he had pined away. I am not going to tell you anything about him just now, because it does

not belong to my story. When I was about five years old, as nearly as I can judge, the doctors advised him to leave England. The house was put into the hands of an agent to let—at least, so I suppose; and he took me with him to Madeira, where he died. I was brought home by his servant, and by my uncle's directions, sent to a boarding-school; from there to Eton, and from there to Oxford.

"Before I had finished my studies, my uncle had been an admiral for some time. The year before I left Oxford, he married Lady Georgiana Thornbury, a widow lady, with one daughter. Thereupon he bade farewell to the sea, though I dare say he did not like the parting, and retired with his bride to the house where he was born—the same house I told you I was born in, which had been in the family for many generations, and which your cousin now lives in.

"It was late in the autumn when they

arrived at Culverwood. They were no sooner settled than my uncle wrote to me, inviting me to spend Christmas-tide with them at the old place. And here you may see that my story has arrived at its beginning.

"It was with strange feelings that I entered the house. It looked so old-fashioned, and stately, and grand, to eyes which had been accustomed to all the modern commonplaces! Yet the shadowy recollections which hung about it gave an air of homeliness to the place, which, along with the grandeur, occasioned a sense of rare delight. For what can be better than to feel that you are in stately company, and at the same time perfectly at home in it? I am grateful to this day for the lesson I had from the sense of which I have spoken—that of mingled awe and tenderness in the aspect of the old hall as I entered it for the first time after fifteen years, having left it a mere child.

"I was cordially received by my old uncle and my new aunt. But the moment Kate Thornbury entered I lost my heart, and have never found it again to this day. I get on wonderfully well without it, though, for I have got the loan of a far better one till I find my own, which, therefore, I hope I never shall."

My father glanced at my mother as he said this, and she returned his look in a way which I can now interpret as a quiet satisfied confidence. But the tears came in Effie's eyes. She had trouble before long, poor girl! But it is not her story I have to tell.—My father went on:

"Your mother was prettier then than she is now, but not so beautiful; beautiful enough, though, to make me think there never had been or could again be anything so beautiful. She met me kindly, and I met her awkwardly."

"You made me feel that I had no business

there," said my mother, speaking for the first time in the course of the story.

"See there, girls," said my father. "You are always so confident in first impressions, and instinctive judgment! I was awkward because, as I said, I fell in love with your mother the moment I saw her; and she thought I regarded her as an intruder into the old family precincts.

"I will not follow the story of the days. I was very happy, except when I felt too keenly how unworthy I was of Kate Thornbury; not that she meant to make me feel it, for she was never other than kind; but she was such that I could not help feeling it. I gathered courage, however, and before three days were over, I began to tell her all my slowly reviving memories of the place, with my childish adventures associated with this and that room or outhouse or spot in the grounds; for the longer I was in the place the more my old associations with it revived,

till I was quite astonished to find how much of my history in connection with Culverwood had been thoroughly imprinted on my memory. She never showed, at least, that she was weary of my stories; which, however interesting to me, must have been tiresome to any one who did not sympathize with what I felt towards my old nest. From room to room we rambled, talking or silent; and nothing could have given me a better chance, I believe, with a heart like your mother's. I think it was not long before she began to like me, at least, and liking had every opportunity of growing into something stronger, if only she too did not come to the conclusion that I was unworthy of her.

"My uncle received me like the jolly old tar that he was—welcomed me to the old ship—hoped we should make many a voyage together—and that I would take the run of the craft—all but in one thing.

"'You see, my boy,' he said, 'I married above my station, and I don't want my wife's friends to say that I laid alongside of her to get hold of her daughter's fortune. No, no, my boy; your old uncle has too much salt water in him to do a dog's trick like that. So you take care of yourself—that's all. She might turn the head of a wiser man than ever came out of our family.'

"I did not tell my uncle that his advice was already too late; for that, though it was not an hour since I had first seen her, my head was so far turned already, that the only way to get it right again, was to go on turning it in the same direction; though, no doubt, there was a danger of overhauling the screw. The old gentleman never referred to the matter again, nor took any notice of our increasing intimacy; so that I sometimes doubt even now if he could have been in earnest in the very simple warning he gave me. Fortunately, Lady Georgiana liked me

—at least I thought she did, and that gave me courage."

"That's all nonsense, my dear," said my mother. "Mamma was nearly as fond of you as I was; but you never wanted courage."

"I knew better than to show my cowardice, I dare say," returned my father. "But," he continued, "things grew worse and worse, till I was certain I should kill myself, or go straight out of my mind, if your mother would not have me. So it went on for a few days, and Christmas was at hand.

"The admiral had invited several old friends to come and spend the Christmas week with him. Now you must remember that, although you look on me as an old-fashioned fogie——"

"Oh, papa!" we all interrupted; but he went on.

"Yet my old uncle was an older-fashioned fogie, and his friends were much the same as

himself. Now, *I* am fond of a glass of port, though I dare not take it, and must content myself with Burgundy. Uncle Bob would have called Burgundy pig-wash. *He* could not do without his port, though he was a moderate enough man, as customs were. Fancy, then, his dismay when, on questioning his butler, an old coxen of his own, and after going down to inspect in person, he found that there was scarcely more than a dozen of port in the wine-cellar. He turned white with dismay, and, till he had brought the blood back to his countenance by swearing, he was something awful to behold in the dim light of the tallow candle old Jacob held in his tattooed fist. I will not repeat the words he used; fortunately, they are out of fashion amongst gentlemen, although ladies, I understand, are beginning to revive the custom, now old, and always ugly. Jacob reminded his honour that he would not have more put down till he had

got a proper cellar built, for the one there was, he had said, was not fit to put anything but dead men in. Thereupon, after abusing Jacob for not reminding him of the necessities of the coming season, he turned to me, and began, certainly not to swear at his own father, but to expostulate sideways with the absent shade for not having provided a decent cellar before his departure from this world of dinners and wine, hinting that it was somewhat selfish, and very inconsiderate of the welfare of those who were to come after him. Having a little exhausted his indignation, he came up, and wrote the most peremptory order to his wine-merchant, in Liverpool, to let him have thirty dozen of port before Christmas Day, even if he had to send it by post-chaise. I took the letter to the post myself, for the old man would trust nobody but me, and indeed would have preferred taking it himself; but in winter he was always lame from the effects of a bruise

he had received from a falling spar in the battle of Aboukir.

"That night I remember well. I lay in bed wondering whether I might venture to say a word, or even to give a hint to your mother that there was a word that pined to be said if it might. All at once I heard a whine of the wind in the old chimney. How well I knew that whine! For my kind aunt had taken the trouble to find out from me what room I had occupied as a boy, and, by the third night I spent there, she had got it ready for me. I jumped out of bed, and found that the snow was falling fast and thick. I jumped into bed again, and began wondering what my uncle would do if the port did not arrive. And then I thought that, if the snow went on falling as it did, and if the wind rose any higher, it might turn out that the roads through the hilly part of Yorkshire in which Culverwood lay, might very well be blocked up.

"The north wind doth blow,
And we shall have snow,
And what will my uncle do then, poor thing?
He'll run for his port,
But he will run short,
And have too much water to drink, poor thing.

"With the influences of the chamber of my childhood crowding upon me, I kept repeating the travestied rhyme to myself, till I fell asleep.

"Now, boys and girls, if I were writing a novel, I should like to make you, somehow or other, put together the facts—that I was in the room I have mentioned; that I had been in the cellar with my uncle for the first time that evening; that I had seen my uncle's distress, and heard his reflections upon his father. I may add that I was not myself, even then, so indifferent to the merits of a good glass of port as to be unable to enter into my uncle's dismay, and that of his guests at last, if they should find that the snow-storm had actually closed up the sweet ap-

proaches of the expected port. If I was personally indifferent to the matter, I fear it is to be attributed to your mother, and not to myself."

"Nonsense!" interposed my mother once more. "I never knew such a man for making little of himself and much of other people. You never drank a glass too much port in your life."

"That's why I'm so fond of it, my dear," returned my father. "I declare you make me quite discontented with my pig-wash here.

"That night I had a dream.

"The next day the visitors began to arrive. Before the evening after, they had all come. There were five of them—three tars and two land-crabs, as they called each other when they got jolly, which, by-the-way, they would not have done long without me.

"My uncle's anxiety visibly increased. Each guest, as he came down to breakfast, received each morning a more constrained

greeting.—I beg your pardon, ladies; I forgot to mention that my aunt had lady-visitors, of course. But the fact is, it is only the port-drinking visitors in whom my story is interested, always excepted your mother.

"These ladies my admiral uncle greeted with something even approaching to servility. I understood him well enough. He instinctively sought to make a party to protect him when the awful secret of his cellar should be found out. But for two preliminary days or so, his resources would serve; for he had plenty of excellent claret and Madeira—stuff I don't know much about—and both Jacob and himself condescended to manœuvre a little.

"The wine did not arrive. But the morning of Christmas Eve did. I was sitting in my room, trying to write a song for Kate—that's your mother, my dears——"

"I know, papa," said Effie, as if she were very knowing to know that.

"———when my uncle came into the room, looking like Sintram with Death and the Other One after him—that's the nonsense you read to me the other day, isn't it, Effie?"

"Not nonsense, dear papa," remonstrated Effie; and I loved her for saying it, for surely *that* is not nonsense.

"I didn't mean it," said my father; and turning to my mother, added: "It must be your fault, my dear, that my children are so serious that they always take a joke for earnest. However, it was no joke with my uncle. If he didn't look like Sintram he looked like t'other one.

"'The roads are frozen—I mean snowed up,' he said. 'There's just one bottle of port left, and what Captain Calker will say—I dare say I know, but I'd rather not. Damn this weather!—God forgive me!—that's not right—but it *is* trying—ain't it, my boy?'

"'What will you give me for a dozen of port, uncle?' was all my answer.

"'Give you? I'll give you Culverwood, you rogue.'

"'Done,' I cried.

"'That is,' stammered my uncle, 'that is,' and he reddened like the funnel of one of his hated steamers, 'that is, you know, always provided, you know. It wouldn't be fair to Lady Georgiana, now, would it? I put it to yourself—if she took the trouble, you know. You understand me, my boy?'

"'That's of course, uncle,' I said.

"'Ah! I see you're a gentleman like your father, not to trip a man when he stumbles,' said my uncle. For such was the dear old man's sense of honour, that he was actually uncomfortable about the hasty promise he had made without first specifying the exception. The exception, you know, has Culverwood at the present hour, and right welcome he is.

"'Of course, uncle,' I said—'between gentlemen, you know. Still, I want my

joke out, too. What will you give me for a dozen of port to tide you over Christmas Day?'

"'Give you, my boy? I'll give you——'

"But here he checked himself, as one that had been burned already.

"'Bah!' he said, turning his back, and going towards the door; 'what's the use of joking about serious affairs like this?'

"And so he left the room. And I let him go. For I had heard that the road from Liverpool was impassable, the wind and snow having continued every day since that night of which I told you. Meantime, I had never been able to summon the courage to say one word to your mother—I beg her pardon, I mean Miss Thornbury.

"Christmas Day arrived. My uncle was awful to behold. His friends were evidently anxious about him. They thought he was ill. There was such a hesitation about him, like a shark with a bait, and such a flurry,

like a whale in his last agonies. He had a horrible secret which he dared not tell, and which yet *would* come out of its grave at the appointed hour.

"Down in the kitchen the roast beef and turkey were meeting their deserts. Up in the store-room—for Lady Georgiana was not above housekeeping, any more than her daughter—the ladies of the house were doing their part; and I was oscillating between my uncle and his niece, making myself amazingly useful now to one and now to the other. The turkey and the beef were on the table, nay, they had been well eaten, before I felt that my moment was come. Outside, the wind was howling, and driving the snow with soft pats against the window-panes. Eager-eyed I watched General Fortescue, who despised sherry or Madeira even during dinner, and would no more touch champagne than he would *eau sucrée*, but drank port after fish or with cheese indiscriminately—

with eager eyes I watched how the last bottle dwindled out its fading life in the clear decanter. Glass after glass was supplied to General Fortescue by the fearless cockswain, who, if he might have had his choice, would rather have boarded a Frenchman than waited for what was to follow. My uncle scarcely ate at all, and the only thing that stopped his face from growing longer with the removal of every dish was that nothing but death could have made it longer than it was already. It was my interest to let matters go as far as they might up to a certain point, beyond which it was not my interest to let them go, if I could help it. At the same time I was curious to know how my uncle would announce—confess the terrible fact that in his house, on Christmas Day, having invited his oldest friends to share with him the festivities of the season, there was not one bottle more of port to be had.

"I waited till the last moment—till I fancied the admiral was opening his mouth, like a fish in despair, to make his confession. He had not even dared to make a confidante of his wife in such an awful dilemma. Then I pretended to have dropped my table-napkin behind my chair, and rising to seek it, stole round behind my uncle, and whispered in his ear:

"'What will you give me for a dozen of port now, uncle?'

"'Bah!' he said, 'I'm at the gratings; don't torture me.'

"'I'm in earnest, uncle.'

"He looked round at me with a sudden flash of bewildered hope in his eye. In the last agony he was capable of believing in a miracle. But he made me no reply. He only stared.

"'Will you give me Kate? I want Kate,' I whispered.

"'I will, my boy. That is, if she'll have

you. That is, I mean to say, if you produce the true tawny.'

"'Of course, uncle; honour bright—as port in a storm,' I answered, trembling in my shoes and everything else I had on, for I was not more than three parts confident in the result.

"The gentlemen beside Kate happening at the moment to be occupied, each with the lady on his other side, I went behind her, and whispered to her as I had whispered to my uncle, though not exactly in the same terms. Perhaps I had got a little courage from the champagne I had drunk; perhaps the presence of the company gave me a kind of mesmeric strength; perhaps the excitement of the whole venture kept me up; perhaps Kate herself gave me courage, like a goddess of old, in some way I did not understand. At all events I said to her:

"'Kate,'—we had got so far even then—'my uncle hasn't another bottle of port in

his cellar. Consider what a state General Fortescue will be in soon. He'll be tipsy for want of it. Will you come and help me to find a bottle or two?'

"She rose at once, with a white-rose blush —so delicate I don't believe any one saw it but myself. But the shadow of a stray ringlet could not fall on her cheek without my seeing it.

"When we got into the hall, the wind was roaring loud, and the few lights were flickering and waving gustily with alternate light and shade across the old portraits which I had known so well as a child—for I used to think what each would say first, if he or she came down out of the frame and spoke to me.

"I stopped, and taking Kate's hand, I said—

"'I daren't let you come farther, Kate, before I tell you another thing: my uncle has promised, if I find him a dozen of port—you must have seen what a state the poor man is

in—to let me say something to you—I suppose he meant your mamma, but I prefer saying it to you, if you will let me. Will you come and help me to find the port?'

"She said nothing, but took up a candle that was on a table in the hall, and stood waiting. I ventured to look at her. Her face was now celestial rosy red, and I could not doubt that she had understood me. She looked so beautiful that I stood staring at her without moving. What the servants could have been about that not one of them crossed the hall, I can't think.

"At last Kate laughed and said—'Well?' I started, and I dare say took my turn at blushing. At least I did not know what to say. I had forgotten all about the guests inside. 'Where's the port?' said Kate. I caught hold of her hand again and kissed it."

"You needn't be quite so minute in your account, my dear," said my mother, smiling.

"I will be more careful in future, my love," returned my father.

"'What do you want me to do?' said Kate.

"'Only to hold the candle for me,' I answered, restored to my seven senses at last; and, taking it from her, I led the way, and she followed, till we had passed through the kitchen and reached the cellar-stairs. These were steep and awkward, and she let me help her down."

"Now, Edward!" said my mother.

"Yes, yes, my love, I understand," returned my father.

"Up to this time your mother had asked no questions; but when we stood in a vast, low cellar, which we had made several turns to reach, and I gave her the candle, and took up a great crowbar which lay on the floor, she said at last—

"'Edward, are you going to bury me alive? or what *are* you going to do?'

"'I'm going to dig you out,' I said, for I was nearly beside myself with joy, as I struck the crowbar like a battering-ram into the wall. You can fancy, John, that I didn't work the worse that Kate was holding the candle for me.

"Very soon, though with great effort, I had dislodged a brick, and the next blow I gave into the hole sent back a dull echo. I was right!

"I worked now like a madman, and, in a very few minutes more, I had dislodged the whole of the brick-thick wall which filled up an archway of stone and curtained an ancient door in the lock of which the key now showed itself. It had been well greased, and I turned it without much difficulty.

"I took the candle from Kate, and led her into a spacious region of sawdust, cobweb, and wine-fungus.

"'There, Kate!' I cried, in delight.

"'But,' said Kate, 'will the wine be good?'

"'General Fortescue will answer you that,' I returned, exultantly. 'Now come, and hold the light again while I find the port-bin.'

"I soon found not one, but several well-filled port-bins. Which to choose I could not tell. I must chance that. Kate carried a bottle and the candle, and I carried two bottles very carefully. We put them down in the kitchen with orders they should not be touched. We had soon carried the dozen to the hall-table by the dining-room door.

"When at length, with Jacob chuckling and rubbing his hands behind us, we entered the dining-room, Kate and I, for Kate would not part with her share in the joyful business, loaded with a level bottle in each hand, which we carefully erected on the sideboard, I presume, from the stare of the company, that we presented a rather remarkable appearance—Kate in her white muslin, and I in my best clothes, covered with brick-dust,

and cobwebs, and lime. But we could not be half so amusing to them as they were to us. There they sat with the dessert before them but no wine-decanters forthcoming. How long they had sat thus, I have no idea. If you think your mamma has, you may ask her. Captain Calker and General Fortescue looked positively white about the gills. My uncle, clinging to the last hope, despairingly, had sat still and said nothing, and the guests could not understand the awful delay. Even Lady Georgiana had begun to fear a mutiny in the kitchen, or something equally awful. But to see the flash that passed across my uncle's face, when he saw us appear with *ported arms!* He immediately began to pretend that nothing had been the matter.

"'What the deuce has kept you, Ned, my boy?' he said. 'Fair Hebe,' he went on, 'I beg your pardon. Jacob, you can go on decanting. It was very careless of you to forget it. Meantime, Hebe, bring that bottle

to General Jupiter, there. He's got a corkscrew in the tail of his robe, or I'm mistaken.'

"Out came General Fortescue's corkscrew. I was trembling once more with anxiety. The cork gave the genuine plop; the bottle was lowered; glug, glug, glug, came from its beneficent throat, and out flowed something tawny as a lion's mane. The general lifted it lazily to his lips, saluting his nose on the way.

"'Fifteen! by Gyeove!' he cried. 'Well, Admiral, this *was* worth waiting for! Take care how you decant that, Jacob—on peril of your life.'

"My uncle was triumphant. He winked hard at me not to tell. Kate and I retired, she to change her dress, I to get mine well brushed, and my hands washed. By the time I returned to the dining-room, no one had any questions to ask. For Kate, the ladies had gone to the drawing-room before she was ready, and I believe she had some difficulty

in keeping my uncle's counsel. But she did. —Need I say that was the happiest Christmas I ever spent?"

"But how did you find the cellar, papa?" asked Effie.

"Where are your brains, Effie? Don't you remember I told you that I had a dream?"

"Yes. But you don't mean to say the existence of that wine-cellar was revealed to you in a dream?"

"But I do, indeed. I had seen the wine-cellar built up just before we left for Madeira. It was my father's plan for securing the wine when the house was let. And very well it turned out for the wine, and me too. I had forgotten all about it. Everything had conspired to bring it to my memory, but had just failed of success. I had fallen asleep under all the influences I told you of—influences from the region of my childhood. They operated still when I was asleep, and,

all other distracting influences being removed, at length roused in my sleeping brain the memory of what I had seen. In the morning I remembered not my dream only, but the event of which my dream was a reproduction. Still, I was under considerable doubt about the place, and in this I followed the dream only, as near as I could judge.

"The admiral kept his word, and interposed no difficulties between Kate and me. Not that, to tell the truth, I was ever very anxious about that rock ahead; but it was very possible that his fastidious honour or pride might have occasioned a considerable interference with our happiness for a time. As it turned out, he could not leave me Culverwood, and I regretted the fact as little as he did himself. His gratitude to me was, however, excessive, assuming occasionally ludicrous outbursts of thankfulness. I do not believe he could have been more grateful if

I had saved his ship and its whole crew. For his hospitality was at stake. Kind old man!"

Here ended my father's story, with a light sigh, a gaze into the bright coals, a kiss of my mother's hand which he held in his, and another glass of Burgundy.

IF I HAD A FATHER.

IF I HAD A FATHER.

A DRAMA.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*A Sculptor's studio.* ARTHUR GERVAISE *working at a clay figure and humming a tune. A knock.*

Ger. Come in. (*Throws a wet cloth over the clay. Enter* WARREN *by the door communicating with the house.*) Ah, Warren! How do you do?

War. How are you, Gervaise? I'm delighted to see you once more. I have but just heard of your return.

Ger. I've been home but a fortnight. I was just thinking of you.

War. I was certain I should find you at work.

Ger. You see my work can go on by any light. It is more independent than yours.

War. I wish it weren't, then.

Ger. Why?

War. Because there would be a chance of our getting you out of your den sometimes.

Ger. Like any other wild beast when the dark falls—eh?

War. Just so.

Ger. And where the good?

War. Why shouldn't you roar a little now and then like other honest lions?

Ger. I doubt if the roaring lions do much beyond roaring.

War. And I doubt whether the lion that won't even whisk his tail, will get food enough shoved through his bars to make it worth his while to keep a cage in London.

Ger. I certainly shall not make use of myself to recommend my work.

War. What is it now?

Ger. Oh, nothing!—only a little fancy of my own.

War. There again! The moment I set foot in your study, you throw the sheet over your clay, and when I ask you what you are working at—"Oh—a little fancy of my own!"

Ger. I couldn't tell it was you coming.

War. Let me see what you've been doing, then.

Ger. Oh, she's a mere Lot's-wife as yet!

War. (*approaching the figure*). Of course, of course! I understand all that.

Ger. (*laying his hand on his arm*). Excuse me: I would rather not show it.

War. I beg your pardon.—I couldn't believe you really meant it.

Ger. I'll show you the mould if you like.

War. I don't know what you mean by that: you would never throw a wet sheet over a cast! (GER. *lifts a painting from the floor and sets it on an easel.* WAR. *regards it*

for a few moments in silence.) Ah! by Jove, Gervaise! some one sent you down the wrong turn: you ought to have been a painter. What a sky! And what a sea! Those blues and greens—rich as a peacock's feather-eyes! Superb! A tropical night! The dolphin at its last gasp in the west, and all above, an abyss of blue, at the bottom of which the stars lie like gems in the mine-shaft of the darkness!

Ger. *You* seem to have taken the wrong turn, Warren! *You* ought to have been a poet.

War. Such a thing as that puts the slang out of a fellow's head.

Ger. I'm glad you like it. I do myself, though it falls short of my intent sadly enough.

War. But I don't for the life of me see what *this* has to do with *that.* You said something about a mould.

Ger. I will tell you what I meant. Every individual aspect of nature looks to me as if

about to give birth to a human form, embodying that of which itself only dreams. In this way landscape-painting is, in my eyes, the mother of sculpture. That Apollo is of the summer dawn; that Aphrodite of the moonlit sea; this picture represents the mother of my Psyche.

War. Under the sheet there?

Ger. Yes. You shall see her some day; but to show your work too soon, is to uncork your champagne before dinner.

War. Well, you've spoiled my picture. I shall go home and scrape my canvas to the bone.

Ger. On second thoughts, I *will* show you my Psyche. (*Uncovers the clay.* WAR. *stands in admiration. Enter* WATERFIELD *by same door.*)

Wat. Ah, Warren! here you are before me! Mr. Gervaise, I hope I see you well.

War. Mr. Waterfield—an old friend of yours, Gervaise, I believe.

Ger. I cannot appropriate the honour.

Wat. I was twice in your studio at Rome, but it's six months ago, Mr. Gervaise. Ha! (*using his eye-glass*) What a charming figure! A Psyche! Wings suggested by—— Very skilful! Contour lovely! Altogether antique in pose and expression!—Is she a commission?

Ger. No.

Wat. Then I beg you will consider her one.

Ger. Excuse me; I never work on commission—at least never in this kind. A bust or two I have done.

Wat. By Jove!—I *should* like to see your model!—This is perfect. Are you going to carve her?

Ger. Possibly.

Wat. Uncommissioned?

Ger. If at all.

Wat. Well, I can't call it running any risk. What lines!—You will let me drop

in some day when you've got your model here?

Ger. Impossible.

Wat. You don't mean——?

Ger. I had no model.

Wat. No model? Ha! ha!—You must excuse me! (GER. *takes up the wet sheet.*) I understand. Reasons. A little mystery enhances—eh?—is convenient too—balks intrusion—throws the drapery over the mignonette. I understand. (GER. *covers the clay.*) Oh! pray don't carry out my figure. That *is* a damper now!

Ger. I am not fond of acting the showman. You must excuse me: I am busy.

Wat. Ah well!—some other time—when you've got on with her a bit. Good morning. Ta, ta, Warren.

Ger. Good morning. This way, if you please. (*Shows him out by the door to the street.*) How did the fellow find his way here?

War. I am the culprit, I'm sorry to say. He asked me for your address, and I gave it him.

Ger. How long have you known him?

War. A month or two.

Ger. Don't bring him here again.

War. Don't say I *brought* him. I didn't do that. But I'm afraid you've not seen the last of him.

Ger. Oh yes, I have! Old Martha would let in anybody, but I've got a man now.—William!

Enter COL. GERVAISE *dressed as a servant.*

You didn't see the gentleman just gone, I'm afraid, William?

Col. G. No, sir.

Ger. Don't let in any one calling himself *Waterfield.*

Col. G. No, sir.

Ger. I'm going out with Mr. Warren. I shall be back shortly.

Col. G. Very well, sir. *Exit into the house.*

Ger. (*to* WAR.) I can't touch clay again till I get that fellow out of my head.

War. Come along, then.

Exeunt GER, *and* WAR.

Re-enter COL. G. *polishing a boot. Regards it with dissatisfaction.*

Col. G. Confound the thing! I wish it were a scabbard. When I think I'm getting it all right—one rub more and it's gone dull again!

The house-door opens slowly, and THOMAS *peeps cautiously in.*

Th. What sort of a plaze be this, maister?

Col. G. You ought to have asked that outside. How did you get in?

Th. By th' dur-hole. Iv yo leave th' dur oppen, th' dogs'll coom in.

Col. G. I must speak to Martha again. She *will* leave the street-door open!—Well,

you needn't look so frightened. It ain't a robbers' cave.

Th. That be more'n aw knaw—not for sartin sure, maister. Nobory mun keawnt upon nobory up to Lonnon, they tells mo. But iv a gentleman axes mo into his heawse, aw'm noan beawn to be afeard. Aw'll coom in, for mayhap yo can help mo. It be a coorous plaze. What dun yo mak here?

Col. G. What would you think now?

Th. It looks to mo like a mason's shed—a greight one.

Col. G. You're not so far wrong.

Th. (*advancing*). It do look a queer plaze. Aw be noan so sure abeawt it. But they wonnot coot mo throat beout warnin'. Aw'll bother noan. (*Sits down on the dais and wipes his face.*) Well, aw be a'most weary.

Col. G. Is there anything I can do for you?

Th. Nay, aw donnot know; but beout aw get somebory to help mo, aw dunnot think

aw'll coom to th' end in haste. Aw're a lookin' for summut aw've lost, mon.

Col. G. Did you come all the way from Lancashire to look for it?

Th. Eh, lad! aw thowt thae'rt beawn to know wheer aw coom fro!

Col. G. Anybody could tell that, the first word you spoke. I mean no offence.

Th. (*looking disappointed*). Well, noan's ta'en. But thae dunnot say thae's ne'er been to Lancashire thisel'?

Col. G. No, I don't say that: I've been to Lancashire several times.

Th. Wheer to?

Col. G. Why, Manchester.

Th. That's noan ov it.

Col. G. And Lancaster.

Th. Tut! tut! That's noan of it, nayther.

Col. G. And Liverpool. I was once there for a whole week.

Th. Nay, nay. Noather o' those plazes. Fur away off 'em.

Col. G. But what does it matter where I have or haven't been?

Th. Mun aw tell tho again? Aw've lost summut, aw tell tho. Didsto ne'er hear tell ov th' owd woman 'at lost her shillin'? Hoo couldn't sit her deawn beawt hoo feawnd it! Yon's me. (*Hides his face in his hands.*)

Col. G. Ah! now I begin to guess! (*aside*). —You don't mean you've lost your——

Th. (*starting up and grasping his stick with both hands*). Aw *do* mane aw've lost mo yung lass; and aw dunnot say thae's feawnd her, but aw do say thae knows wheer hoo is. Aw do. Theighur! Nea then!

Col. G. What on earth makes you think that? I don't know what you're after.

Th. Thae knows well enough. Thae knowed what aw'd lost afoor aw tou'd tho. Yo' be denyin' your own name. Thae knows. Aw'll tay tho afore the police, beout thou gie her oop. Aw wull.

Col. G. What story have you to tell the police then? They'll want to know.

Th. Story saysto? The dule's i' th' mon! Didn't aw seigh th' mon 'at stealed her away goo into this heawse not mich over hauve an hour ago?—Aw seigh him wi' mo own eighes.

Col. G. Why didn't you speak to him?

Th. He poppit in at th' same dur, and there aw've been a-watching ever since. Aw've not took my eighes off ov it. He's somewheeres now in this same heawse.

Col. G. He *may* have been out in the morning (*aside*).—But you see there are more doors than one to the place. There is a back door; and there is a door out into the street.

Th. Eigh! eigh! Th' t'one has to do wi' th' t'other—have it? Three dur-holes to one shed! That looks bad!

Col. G. He's not here, whoever it was. There's not a man but myself in the place.

Th. Hea am aw to know yo're not playin'

a marlock wi' mo? He'll be oop i' th' heawse theer. Aw mun go look (*going*).

Col. G. (*preventing him*). And how am *I* to know you're not a housebreaker?

Th. Dun yo think an owd mon like mosel' would be of mich use for sich wark as that, mon?

Col. G. The more fit for a spy, though, to see what might be made of it.

Th. Eh, mon! Dun they do sich things as yon? But aw'm seechin' nothin', man nor meawse, that donnot belung me. Aw tell yo true. Gie mo mo Mattie, and aw'll trouble yo no moor. Aw winnot—if yo'll give mo back mo Mattie. (*Comes close up to him and lays his hand on his arm.*) Be yo a feyther, mon?

Col. G. Yes.

Th. Ov a pratty yung lass?

Col. G. Well, no. I have but a son.

Th. Then thae winnot help mo?

Col. G. I shall be very glad to help you, if you will tell me how.

Th. Tell yor maister 'at Mattie's owd feyther's coom a' the gait fro Rachda to fot her whoam, and aw'll be much obleeged to him iv he'll let her goo beout lunger delay, for her mother wants her to whoam: hoo's but poorly. Tell yor maister that.

Col. G. But I don't believe my master knows anything about her.

Th. Aw're tellin' tho, aw seigh' th' mon goo into this heawse but a feow minutes agoo?

Col. G. You've mistaken somebody for him.

Th. Well, aw'm beawn to tell tho moore. Twothre days ago, aw seigh mo chylt coom eawt ov this same dur—aw mane th' heawse-dur, yon.

Col. G. Are you sure of that?

Th. Sure as death. Aw seigh her back.

Col. G. Her back! Who could be sure of a back?

Th. By th' maskins! dosto think I dunnot

know mo Mattie's back? I seign her coom eawt o' that dur, aw tell tho!

Col. G. Why didn't you speak to her?

Th. Aw co'd.

Col. G. And she didn't answer?

Th. Aw didn't co' leawd. Aw're not willin' to have ony mak ov a din.

Col. G. But you followed her surely?

Th. Aw did; but aw're noan so good at walkin' as aw wur when aw coom; th' stwons ha' blistered mo fet. An it're the edge o' dark like. Aw connot seigh weel at neet, wi o' th' lamps; an afoor aw geet oop wi' her, hoo's reawnd th' nook, and gwon fro mo seet.

Col. G. There are ten thousands girls in London you might take for your own under such circumstances—not seeing more than the backs of them.

Th. Ten theawsand girls like mo Mattie, saysto?—wi'her greight eighes and her lung yure?—Puh!

Col. G. But you've just said you didn't see her face!

Th. Dunnot aw know what th' face ov mo chylt be like, beout seein' ov it? Aw'm noan ov a lump-yed. Nobory as seigh her once wouldn't know her again.

Col. G. (*aside*). He's a lunatic!—I don't see what I can do for you, old fellow.

Th. (*rising*). And aw met ha' known it beout axin'! O'reet! Aw're a greight foo'! But aw're beawn to coom in: aw lung'd to goo through th' same dur wi' mo Mattie. Good day, sir. It be like maister, like mon! God's curse upon o' sich! (*Turns his back. After a moment turns again.*) Noa. Aw winnot say that; for mo Mattie's sake aw winnot say that. God forgie you! (*going by the house*).

Col. G. This way, please! (*opening the street-door*).

Th. Aw see. Aw'm not to have a chance ov seein' oather Mattie or th' mon. *Exit.*

COL. G. *resumes his boot absently. Re-enter* THOMAS, *shaking his fist.*

Th. But aw tell tho, aw'll stick to th' place day and neet, aw wull. Aw wull. Aw wull.

Col. G. Come back to-morrow.

Th. Coom back, saysto? Aw'll not goo away (*growing fierce*). Wilto gie mo mo Mattie? Aw'm noan beawn to ston here so mich lunger. Wilto gie mo mo Mattie?

Col. G. I cannot give you what I haven't got.

Th. Aw'll break thi yed, thou villain! (*threatening him with his stick*). Eh, Mattie! Mattie! to loe sich a mon's maister more'n me! I would dey fur thee, Mattie. *Exit.*

Col. G. It's all a mistake, of course. There are plenty of young men—but my Arthur's none of such. I cannot believe it of him. The daughter! If I could find *her*, *she* would settle the question. (*It begins to grow dark.*) I must help the old man to find her. He's

sure to come back. Arthur does *not* look the least like it. But—(*polishes vigorously*). I can*not* get this boot to look like a gentleman's. I wish I had taken a lesson or two first. I'll get hold of a shoeblack, and make him come for a morning or two. No, he does *not* look like it. There he comes. (*Goes on polishing.*)

Enter GER.

Ger. William!

Col. G. (*turning*). Yes, sir.

Ger. Light the gas. Any one called?

Col. G. Yes, sir.

Ger. Who?

Col. G. I don't know, sir. (*Lighting the gas.*)

Ger. You should have asked his name. (*Stands before the clay, contemplating it.*)

Col. G. I'm sorry I forgot, sir. It was only an old man from the country—after his daughter, he said.

Ger. Came to offer his daughter, or himself perhaps. (*Begins to work at the figure.*)

Col. G. (*watching him stealthily*). He looked a respectable old party—from Lancashire, he said.

Ger. I dare say. You will have many such callers. Take the address. Models, you know.

Col. G. If he calls again, sir?

Ger. Ask him to leave his address, I say.

Col. G. But he told me you knew her.

Ger. Possibly. I had a good many models before I left. But it's of no consequence; I don't want any at present.

Col. G. He seemed in a great way, sir—and swore. I couldn't make him out.

Ger. Ah! hm!

Col. G. He says he saw her come out of the house.

Ger. *Has* there been any girl here? Have you seen any about?

Col. G. No, sir.

Ger. My aunt had a dressmaker to meet her here the other evening. I have had no model since I came back.

Col. G. The man was in a sad taking about her, sir. I didn't know what to make of it. There seemed some truth—something suspicious.

Ger. Perhaps my aunt can throw some light upon it. (COL. G. *lingers.*) That will do. (*Exit* COL. G.) How oddly the man behaves! A sun-stroke in India, perhaps. Or he may have had a knock on the head. I must keep my eye on him. (*Stops working, steps backward, and gazes at the Psyche.*) She is growing very like some one! Who can it be? She knows she is puzzling me, the beauty! See how she is keeping back a smile! She knows if she lets one smile out, her whole face will follow it through the clay. How strange the half-lights of memory are! You know and you don't know—both at once. Like a bat in the twilight you are

sure of it, and the same moment it is nowhere. Who *is* my Psyche like?—The forehead above the eyebrow, and round by the temple? The half-playful, half-sorrowful curve of the lip? The hope in the lifted eyelid? There is more there than ever I put there. Some power has been shaping my ends. By heaven, I have it!—No—yes—it is—it is Constance—momently dawning out of the clay! What *does* this mean? *She* never gave me a sitting—at least, she has not done so for the last ten years—yet here she is—she, and no other! I never thought she was beautiful. When she came with my aunt the other day though, I did fancy I saw a new soul dawning through the lovely face. Here it is—the same soul breaking through the clay of my Psyche!—I will give just one touch to the corner of the mouth.

Gives a few touches, then steps back again and contemplates the figure. Turns away and walks up and down. The

light darkens to slow plaintive music, which lasts for a minute. Then the morning begins to dawn, gleaming blue upon the statues and casts, and revealing GER. *seated before his Psyche, gazing at her. He rises, and exit. Enter* COL. G. *and looks about.*

Col. G. I don't know what to make of it! Or rather I'm afraid I do know what to make of it! It looks bad. He's not been in bed all night. But it shows he has some conscience left—and that's a comfort.

Enter MRS. CLIFFORD, *peeping round cautiously.*

Col. G. What, Clara! you here so early!

Mrs. C. Well, you know, brother, you're so fond of mystery!

Col. G. It's very kind of you to come! But we must be very careful; I can't tell when my master may be home.

Mrs. C. Has he been out all night, then?

Col. G. Oh no; he's just gone.

Mrs. C. I never knew him such an early bird. I made sure he was safe in bed for a couple of hours yet. But I do trust, Walter, you have had enough of this fooling, and are prepared to act like a rational man and a gentleman.

Col. G. On the contrary, Clara, with my usual obstinacy, I am more determined than ever that my boy shall not know me, until, as I told you, I have rendered him such service as may prove me not altogether unworthy to be his father. Twenty years of neglect will be hard to surmount.

Mrs. C. But mere menial service cannot discharge the least portion of your obligations. As his father alone can you really serve him.

Col. G. You persist in misunderstanding me. This is not the service I mean. I scorn the fancy. This is only the means, as I told you plainly before, of finding out *how* I may serve him—of learning what he really needs

—or most desires. If I fail in discovering how to recommend myself to him, I shall go back to India, and content myself with leaving him a tolerable fortune.

Mrs. C. How ever a hair-brained fellow like you, Walter, could have made such a soldier!—Why don't you tell your boy you love him, and have done with it?

Col. G. I will, as soon as I have proof to back the assertion.

Mrs. C. I tell you it is rank pride.

Col. G. It may be pride, sister; but it is the pride of a repentant thief who puts off his confession until he has the money in his hand to prove the genuineness of his sorrow.

Mrs. C. It never *was* of any use to argue with *you*, Walter; you know that, or at least I know it. So I give up.—I trust you have got over your prejudice against his profession. It is not my fault.

Col. G. In truth, I had forgotten the pro-

fession—as you call it—in watching the professor.

Mrs. C. And has it not once occurred to you to ask how he may take such watching?

Col. G. By the time he is aware of it, he will be ready to understand it.

Mrs. C. But suppose he should discover you before you have thus established your position?

Col. G. I must run the risk.

Mrs. C. Suppose then you should thus find out something he would not have you know?

Col. G. (*hurriedly*). Do you imagine his servant might know a thing he would hide from his father?

Mrs. C. I do not, Walter. I can trust him. But he might well resent the espionage of even his father. You cannot get rid of the vile look of the thing.

Col. G. Again I say, my boy shall be my judge, and my love shall be my plea. In any

case I shall have to ask his forgiveness. But there is his key in the lock! Run into the house.

Exit MRS. C. *Enter* GER., *and goes straight to the Psyche.*

Col. G. Breakfast is waiting, sir.

Ger. By and by, William.

Col. G. You haven't been in bed, sir!

Ger. Well? What of that?

Col. G. I hope you're not ill, sir.

Ger. Not in the least: I work all night sometimes.—You can go. (COL. G. *lingers, with a searching gaze at the Psyche.*)—I don't want anything.

Col. G. Pardon me, sir, but I am sure you are ill. You've done *no* work since last night.

Ger. (*with displeasure*). I am quite well, and wish to be alone.

Col. G. Mayn't I go and fetch a doctor, sir? It is better to take things in time.

Ger. You are troublesome. (*Exit* COL. G.)

—What can the fellow mean? He looked at me so strangely too! He's officious—that's all, I dare say. A good sort of man, I do think! William!—What is it in the man's face?—(*Enter Col. G.*) Is the breakfast ready?

Col. G. Quite ready, sir.

Ger. I'm sorry I spoke to you so hastily. The fact is——

Col. G. Don't mention it, sir. Speak as you will to me; I shan't mind it. When there's anything on a man's conscience—I—I—I mean on a man's mind——

Ger. What *do* you mean?

Col. G. I mean, when there is anything there, he can't well help his temper, sir.

Ger. I don't understand you; but, anyhow, you—go too far, William.

Col. G. I beg your pardon, sir: I forgot myself. I do humbly beg your pardon. Shall I make some fresh coffee, sir? It's not cold—only it's stood too long.

Ger. The coffee will do well enough. (*Exit* Col. G.)—*Is* she so beautiful? (*turning to the Psyche*)—Is there a likeness?—I see it.—Nonsense! A mere chance confluence of the ideal and the actual.—Even then the chance must mean something. Such a *mere* chance would indeed be a strange one!

Enter Constance.

Oh, my heart! here she comes! my Psyche herself!—Well, Constance!

Con. Oh, Arthur, I am *so* glad I've found you! I want to talk to you about something. I know you don't care much about me now, but I *must* tell you, for it would be wrong not.

Ger. (*aside*). How beautiful she is! What *can* she have to tell me about? It cannot be —it *shall* not be—. Sit down, won't you? (*offering her a chair.*)

Con. No. *You* sit there (*pointing to the dais*), and I will sit here (*placing herself on*

the lower step). It was here I used to sit so often when I was a little girl. Why can't one keep little? I was always with you then! (*Sighs.*)

Ger. It is not my fault, Constance.

Con. Oh no! I suppose it can't be. Only I don't see why. Oh, Arthur, where should I be but for you! I saw the old place yesterday. How dreadful and yet how dear it was!

Ger. Who took you there?

Con. Nobody. I went alone.

Ger. It was hardly safe.—I don't like your going out alone, Constance.

Con. Why, Arthur! I used to know every court and alley about Shoreditch better than I know Berkeley Square now!

Ger. But what made you go there?

Con. I went to find a dressmaker who has been working for my aunt, and lost my way. And—would you believe it?—I was actually frightened!

Ger. No wonder! There are rough people about there.

Con. I never used to think them rough when I lived among them with my father and mother. There must be just as good people there as anywhere else. Yet I could not help shuddering at the thought of living there again!—How strange it made me feel! You have been my angel, Arthur. What would have become of me if you hadn't taken me, I dare not think.

Ger. I have had my reward, Constance: you are happy.

Con. Not quite. There's something I want to tell you.

Ger. Tell on, child.

Con. Oh, thank you!—that is how you used to talk to me. (*Hesitates.*)

Ger. (*with foreboding*) Well, what is it?

Con. (*pulling the fingers of her gloves*) A gentleman—you know him—has been—calling upon aunt—and me. We have seen a good deal of him.

Ger. Who is he?

Con. Mr. Waterfield. (*Keeps her eyes on the floor.*)

Ger. Well?

Con. He says—he—he—he wants me to marry him.—Aunt likes him.

Ger. And you?

Con. I like him too. I don't think I like him enough—I dare say I shall. It is *so* good of him to take poor me! He is *very* rich, they say.

Ger. Have you accepted him?

Con. I am afraid he thinks so.—Ye—e—s. —I hardly know.

Ger. Haven't you—been rather—in a hurry—Constance?

Con. No, indeed! I haven't been in a hurry at all. He has been a long time trying to make me like him. I have been too long a burden to Mrs. Clifford.

Ger. So! it is her doing, then!

Con. You were away, you know.

Ger. (*bitterly*) Yes; too far—chipping stones and making mud-pies!

Con. I don't know what you mean by that, Arthur.

Ger. Oh—nothing. I mean that—that—. Of course if you are engaged to him, then—

Con. I'm afraid I've done very wrong, Arthur. If I had thought you would care!—I knew aunt would be pleased!—she wanted me to have him, I knew.—I ought to do what I can to please her,—ought I not? I have no right to——

Ger. Surely, surely. Yes, yes; I understand. It was not your fault. Only you mustn't marry him, if you——. Thank you for telling me.

Con. I ought to have told you before—before I let him speak to me again. But I didn't think you would care—not much.

Ger. Yes, yes.

Con. (*looking up with anxiety*) Ah! you *are* vexed with me, Arthur! I see how wrong

it was now. I never saw you look like that. I am very, very sorry. (*Bursts into tears.*)

Ger. No, no, child! Only it is rather sudden, and I want to think about it. Shall I send William home with you?

Con. No, thank you. I have a cab waiting. You're not angry with your little beggar, Arthur?

Ger. What is there to be angry about, child?

Con. That I—did anything without asking you first.

Ger. Nonsense! You couldn't help it. *You're* not to blame one bit.

Con. Oh, yes, I am! I ought to have asked you first. But indeed I did not know you would care. Good-bye.—Shall I go at once?

Ger. Good-bye. (*Exit* CON., *looking back troubled.*) Come at last! Oh fool! fool! fool! In love with her at last!—and too late! For three years I haven't seen her—have not

once written to her! Since I came back I've seen her just twice,—and now in the very hell of love! The ragged little darling that used to lie coiled up there in that corner! If it were my sister, it would be hard to lose her so! And to such a fellow as that!—not even a gentleman! How *could* she take him for one! That does perplex me! Ah, well! I suppose men *have* borne such things before, and men will bear them again! I must work! Nothing but work will save me. (*Approaches the Psyche, but turns from it with a look of despair and disgust.*) What a fool I have been! —Constance! Constance!—A brute like that to touch one of her fingers! God in heaven! It will drive me mad. (*Rushes out, leaving the door open.*)

Enter COL. GERVAISE.

Col. G. Gone again! and without his breakfast! My poor boy! There's something very wrong with you! It's that girl!

It must be! But there's conscience in him yet!—It is all my fault. If I had been a father to him, this would never have happened.—If he were to marry the girl now?—Only, who can tell but *she* led *him* astray? I have known such a thing. (*Sits down and buries his face in his hands.*)

Enter WATERFIELD.

Wat. Is Mr. Gervaise in?

Col. G. (*rising*) No, sir.

Wat. Tell him I called, will you? [*Exit.*

Col. G. Yes, sir.—Forgot again. Young man;—gentleman or cad?—don't know; think the latter.

Enter THOMAS.

Th. Han yo heard speyk ov mo chylt yet, sir?

Col. G. (*starting up*). In the name of God, I know nothing of your child; but bring her here, and I will give you a hundred pounds—in golden sovereigns.

Th. Hea am aw to fot her yere, when I dunnot know wheer hoo be, sir?

Col. G. That's your business. Bring her, and there will be your money.

Th. Dun yo think, sir, o' the gouden suverings i' th' Bank ov England would put a sharper edge on mo oud eighes when they look for mo lass? Eh, mon! Yo dunnot know the heart ov a feyther—ov the feyther ov a lass-barn, sir. Han yo kilt and buried her, and nea be yo sorry for't? I' hoo be dead and gwoan, tell mo, sir, and aw'll goo whoam again, for mo oud lass be main lonesome beout mo, and we'll wait till we goo to her, for hoo winnot coom no moor to us.

Col. G. For anything I know, your daughter is alive and well. Bring her here, I say, and I will make you happy.

Th. Aw shannot want thee or thi suverings either to mak mo happy then, maister. Iv aw hed a houd o' mo lass, it's noan o' yere

aw'd be a coomin' wi' her. It's reet streight whoam to her mother we'd be gooin', aw'll be beawn. Nay, nay, mon!—aw'm noan sich a greight foo as yo tak mo for.

Exit. COL. G. *follows him. Enter.* GER. *Sits down before the Psyche, but without looking at her.*

Ger. Oh those fingers! They are striking terrible chords on my heart! I *will* conquer it. But I *will* love her. The spear shall fill its own wound. To draw it out and die, would be no victory. "I'll but lie down and bleed awhile, and then I'll rise and fight again." Brave old Sir Andrew!

Enter COL. G.

Col. G. I beg your pardon, sir—a young man called while you were out.

Ger. (*listlessly*). Very well, William.

Col. G. Is there any message, if he calls again, sir? He said he would.

Ger. No. (COL. G. *lingers.*) You can go

Col. G. I hope you feel better, sir?

Ger. Quite well.

Col. G. Can I get you anything, sir?

Ger. No, thank you; I want nothing.—Why do you stay?

Col. G. Can't you think of something I can do for you, sir?

Ger. Fetch that red cloth.

Col. G. Yes, sir.

Ger. Throw it over that——

Col. G. This, sir?

Ger. No, no—the clay there. Thank you. (*A knock at the door.*) See who that is.

Col. G. Are you at home, sir?

Ger. That depends. Not to Mr. Waterfield. Oh, my head! my head! [*Exit* COL. G.

Enter CONSTANCE. GER. *starts, but keeps his head leaning on his hand.*

Con. I forgot to say to you, Arthur,——. But you are ill! What is the matter, dear Arthur?

Ger. (*without looking up*) Nothing—only a headache.

Con. Do come home with me, and let aunt and me nurse you. Don't be vexed with me any more. I will do whatever you like. I couldn't go home without seeing you again. And now I find you ill!

Ger. Not a bit. I am only dreadfully busy. I must go out of town. I am so busy! I can't stay in it a moment longer. I have so many things to do.

Con. Mayn't I come and see you while you work? I never used to interrupt you. I want so to sit once more in my old place. (*Draws a stool towards him.*)

Ger. No, no—not—not there! Constance used to sit there. William!

Con. You frighten me, Arthur!

Enter Col. G.

Ger. Bring a chair, William.

Constance sits down like a chidden child.

Exit Col. G.

Con. I must have offended you more than I thought, Arthur! What *can* I say? It is so stupid to be always saying *I am sorry.*

Ger. No, no. But some one may call.

Con. You mean more than that. Will you not let me understand?

Ger. Your friend Mr. Waterfield called a few minutes ago. He will be here again presently, I dare say.

Con. (*indifferently*). Indeed!

Ger. I suppose you appointed—expected—to meet him here.

Con. Arthur! Do you think I would come to you to meet *him?* I saw him this morning; I don't want to see him again. I wish you knew him.

Ger. Why should you want me to know him?

Con. Because you would do him good.

Ger. What good does he want done him?

Con. He has got beautiful things in him—

talks well—in bits—arms and feet and faces —never anything like—(*turning to the Psyche*) Why have you—— ? Has *she* been naughty too ?

Ger. Is it *only* naughty things that must be put out of sight, Constance ?

Con. Dear Arthur ! you spoke like your own self then.

Ger. (*rising hurriedly*). Excuse me. I must go. It is very rude, but—William !

Enter Col. G.

Col. G. Yes, sir.

Ger. Fetch a hansom directly.

Col. G. Yes, sir. *Exit.*

Con. You do frighten me, Arthur ! I am sure you are ill.

Ger. Not at all.. I have an engagement.

Con. I must go then—must I ?

Ger. Do not think me unkind ?

Con. I will not think anything you would not have me think.

Re-enter COL. G.

Col. G. The cab is at the door, sir.

Ger. Thank you. Then show Miss Lacordère out. Stay. I will open the door for her myself. *Exeunt* GER. *and* CON.

Col. G. He speaks like one in despair, forcing every word! If he should die! Oh, my God!

Re-enter GER. *Walks up and down the room.*

Col. G. Ain't you going, sir?

Ger. No. I have sent the lady in the cab.

Col. G. Then hadn't you better lie down, sir?

Ger. Lie down! What do you mean? I'm not in the way of lying down except to sleep.

Col. G. And let me go for the doctor, sir?

Ger. The doctor! Ha! ha ha!—You are a soldier, you say?

Col. G. Yes, sir.

Ger. Right. We're all soldiers—or ought to be. I will put you to your catechism. What is a soldier's first duty?

Col. G. Obedience, sir.

[GER. *sits down and leans his head on his hands.* COL. G. *watches him.*

Ger. Ah! obedience, is it? Then turn those women out. They will hurt you—may kill you; but you must not mind that. They burn, they blister, and they blast, for as white as they look! The hottest is the white fire. But duty, old soldier!—obedience, you know!—Ha! ha! Oh, my head! my head! I believe I am losing my senses, William. I was in a bad part of the town this morning. I went to see a place I knew long ago. It had gone to hell—but the black edges of it were left. There was a smell—and I can't get it out of me. Oh, William! William! take hold of me. Don't let them come near me. Psyche is laughing at me. I told you to throw the red cloth over her.

Col. G. My poor boy!

Ger. Don't fancy you're my father, though! I wish you were. But I cannot allow that.—Why the devil didn't you throw the red cloth over that butterfly? She's sucking the blood from my heart.

Col. G. You said the Psyche, sir! The red cloth *is* over the Psyche, sir. Look.

Ger. Yes. Yes. I beg your pardon. Take it off. It is too red. It will scorch her wings. It burns my brain. Take it off, I say! (COL. G. *uncovers the Psyche.*) There! I told you! She's laughing at me! Ungrateful child! *I*'m not her Cupid. Cover her up. Not the red cloth again. It's too hot, I say. I won't torture *her*. I am a man and I can bear it. She's a woman and she shan't bear it.

Sinks back in his chair. COL. G. *lays him on the dais, and sits down beside him.*

Col. G. His heart's all right! And when a fellow's miserable over his faults,

there must be some way out of them.—But the consequences?—Ah! there's the rub.

Ger. What's the matter? Where am I?

Col. G. I must fetch a doctor, sir. You've been in a faint.

Ger. Why couldn't I keep in it? It was very nice: you know nothing—and that's the nicest thing of all. Why is it we can't stop, William?

Col. G. I don't understand you, sir.

Ger. Stop living, I mean. It's no use killing yourself, for you don't stop then. At least they say you go on living all the same. If I thought it did mean stopping, William—

Col. G. Do come to your room, sir.

Ger. I won't. I'll stop here. How hot it is! Don't let anybody in.

Stretches out his hand. Col. G. *holds it. He falls asleep.*

Col. G. What *shall* I do? If he married her, he'd be miserable, and make her miser-

able too. I'll take her away somewhere. I'll be a father to her; I'll tend her as if she were his widow. But what confusions would follow! Alas! alas! one crime is the mother of a thousand miseries! And now he's in for a fever—typhus, perhaps!—I *must* find this girl!—What a sweet creature that Miss Lacordère is! If only he might have *her!* I don't care what she was.

Ger. Don't let them near me, William! They will drive me mad. They think I shall love them. I *will* not. If she comes one step nearer, I shall strike her. You Diana! Hecate! Hell-cat!—Fire-hearted Chaos is burning me to ashes! My brain is a cinder! Some water, William!

Col. G. Here it is, sir.

Ger. But just look to Psyche there. Ah! she's off! There she goes! melting away in the blue, like a dissolving vapour. Bring me my field-glass, William. I may catch a glimpse of her yet. Make haste.

Col. G. Pray don't talk so, sir. Do be quiet, or you will make yourself very ill. Think what will become of me if——

Ger. What worse would *you* be, William? You are a soldier. I must talk. You are all wrong about it: it keeps me quiet (*holding his head with both hands*). I should go raving mad else (*wildly*). Give me some water. (*He drinks eagerly, then looks slowly round the room.*) Now they *are* gone, and I do believe they won't come again! I see everything—and your face, William. You are very good to me—very patient! I should die if it weren't for you.

Col. G. I would die for you, sir.

Ger. Would you? But perhaps you don't care much for your life. Anybody might have *my* life for the asking. I dare say it's just as good to be dead.—Ah! there is a toad—a toad with a tail! No; it's a toad with a slow-worm after him. Take them away, William!—Thank you.—I used to think life

pleasant, but now—somehow there's nothing in it. She told me the truth about it—Constance did. Don't let those women come back. What if I *should* love them, William!—love and hate them both at once! William! William! (*A knock at the door.*) See who that is. Mind you don't let *them* in.

Col. G. Martha is there, sir.

Ger. She's but an old woman; she can't keep them out. They would walk over her. All the goddesses have such long legs! You go and look. You'll easily know them: if they've got no irises to their eyes, don't let them in, for the love of God, William! Real women have irises to their eyes: those have none—those frightful snowy beauties.—And yet snow is very nice! And I'm so hot! *There* they come again! *Exit* Col. G.

Enter Mrs. Clifford.

Ger. Aunt! aunt! help me! There they come!

Mrs. C. What is it, my Arthur? They shan't hurt you. I am here. I will take care of you.

Ger. Yes, yes, you will! I am not a bit afraid of them now. Do you know them, aunt? I'll tell you a secret: they are Juno and Diana and Venus.—They hate sculptors. But I never wronged them. Three white women — only, between their fingers and behind their knees they are purple—and inside their lips, when they smile—and in the hollows of their eyes—ugh! They want me to love them; and they say you are all—all of you women—no better than they are. I *know* that is a lie; for they have no eyelids and no irises to their eyes.

Mrs. C. Dear boy, they shan't come near you. Shall I sing to you, and drive them away?

Ger. No, don't. I can't bear birds in my brain.

Mrs. C. How long have you had this headache? (*laying her hand on his forehead.*)

Ger. Only a year or two—since the white woman came—that woman (*pointing to the Psyche*). She's been buried for ages, and won't grow brown.

Mrs. C. There's no woman there, Arthur.

Ger. Of course not. It was an old story that bothered me. Oh, my head! my head! —There's my father standing behind the door and won't come in!—*He* could help me now, if he would. William! show my father in. But he isn't in the story—so he can't.

Mrs. C. Do try to keep yourself quiet, Arthur. The doctor will be here in a few minutes.

Ger. He shan't come here! He would put the white woman out. She does smell earthy, but I won't part with her. (*A knock.*) What a devil of a noise! Why don't they use the knocker? What's the use of taking a sledge-hammer?

Mrs. C. It's that stupid James!

Enter CONSTANCE. MRS. C. *goes to meet her.*

Mrs. C. Constance, you go and hurry the doctor. I will stay with Arthur.

Con. Is he *very* ill, aunt?

Mrs. C. I'm afraid he is.

Ger. (*sitting up*). Constance! Constance!

Con. Here I am! (*running to him*).

Ger. Oh, my head! I wish I could find somewhere to lay it!—Sit by me, Constance, and let me lay my head on your shoulder—for one minute—only one minute. It aches so! (*She sits down by him. His head sinks on her shoulder.* MRS. C. *looks annoyed, and exit.*)

Con. Thank you, thank you, dear Arthur! (*sobbing*). You used to like me! I could not believe you hated me now. You *have* forgiven me? Dear head!

He closes his eyes. Slow plaintive music.

Ger. (*half waking*). I can't read. When I get to the bottom of the page, I wonder what it was all about. I shall never get

to Garibaldi! and if I don't, I shall never get farther. If I could but keep that one line away! It drives me mad, mad. "He took her by the lily-white hand."—I could strangle myself for thinking of such things, but they *will* come!—I *won't* go mad. I should never get to Garibaldi, and never be rid of this red-hot ploughshare ploughing up my heart. I will *not* go mad! I will die like a man.

Con. Arthur! Arthur!

Ger. God in heaven! she is there! And the others are behind her!—Psyche! Psyche! Don't speak to those women! Come alone, and I will tear my heart out and give it you. —It is Psyche herself now, and the rest are gone! Psyche—listen.

Con. It's only me, Arthur! your own little Constance! If aunt would but let me stay and nurse you! But I don't know what's come to her: she's not like herself at all.

Ger. Who's that behind you?

Con. Behind me? (*looking round*). There's nobody behind me.

Ger. I thought there was somebody behind you. William!—What can have become of William?

Con. I dare say aunt has sent him somewhere.

Ger. Then he's gone! he's gone!

Con. You're not afraid of being left alone with me, Arthur?

Ger. Oh no! of course not?—What *can* have become of William? Don't you know they sent him—not those women, but the dead people—to look after me? He's a good fellow. He said he would die for me. Ha! ha! ha! Not much in that—is there?

Con. Don't laugh so, dear Arthur.

Ger. Well, I won't. I have something to tell you, Constance. I will try to keep my senses till I've told you.

Con. Do tell me. I hope I haven't done anything more to vex you. Indeed I am

sorry. I won't speak to that man again, if you like. I would rather not—if you wish it.

Ger. What right have I to dictate to you, my child?

Con. Every right. I am yours. I belong to you. Nobody owned me when you took me.

Ger. Don't talk like that; you will drive me mad.

Con. Arthur! Arthur!

Ger. Listen to me, Constance. I am going to Garibaldi. He wants soldiers. I must not live an idle life any longer.—We must part, Constance.—Good-bye, my darling!

Con. No, no; not yet; we'll talk about it by-and-by. You see I shall have ever so many things to make for you before you can go! (*smiling*).

Ger. Garibaldi can't wait, Constance—and *I* can't wait. I shall die if I stop here.

Con. Oh, Arthur, you are in some trouble, and you won't tell me what it is, so I can't help you!

Ger. I shall be killed, I know. I mean to be. Will you think of me sometimes? Give me one kiss. I may have a last kiss.

Con. (*weeping.*) My heart will break if you talk like that, Arthur. I will do anything you please. There's something wrong, dreadfully wrong! And it must be my fault!—Oh! there's that man! (*starting up.*) He shall *not* come here.

[*Runs to the house-door, and stands listening, with her hand on the key.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A street in Mayfair.* MRS. CLIFFORD'S *house. A pastrycook's shop. Boys looking in at the window.*

Bill. I say, Jim, ain't it a lot o' grub? If I wos a pig now,——

Jack. I likes to hear Bill a supposin' of hisself. Go it, Bill!—There ain't nothink *he* can't suppose hisself, Jim.—Bein' as you ain't a pig, Bill, you've got yer own trotters, an' yer own tater-trap.

Bill. Vereupon blue Bobby eccosts me with the remark, "I wants you, Bill;" and seein' me too parerlyzed to bolt, he pops me in that 'ere jug vithout e'er a handle.

Jack. Mother kep' a pig once.

Jim. What was he like, Jack?

Jack. As like any other pig as ever he could look; accep' that where other pigs is black he wor white, an' where other pigs is white he wor black.

Jim. Did you have the milk in your tea, Jack?

Jack. Pigs ain't got no milk, Jim, you stupe!

Bill. Pigs *has* milk, Jack, only they don't give it to coves.—I wish I wos the Lord Mayor!

Jack. Go it again, Bill. He ought ha' been a beak, Bill ought. What 'ud you do, Bill, supposin' as how you wos the Lord Mayor?

Bill. I'd take all the beaks, an' all the peelers, an' put their own bracelets on 'em, an' feed 'em once a day on scraps o' wittles to bring out the hunger: a cove can't be hungry upon nuffin at all.

Jim. He gets what mother calls the squeamishes.

Jack. Well, Bill?

Bill. Well, the werry moment their bellies was as long an' as loose as a o'-clo'-bag of a winter's mornin', I'd bring 'em all up to this 'ere winder, five or six at a time—with the darbies on, mind ye——

Jim. And I'm to be there to see, Bill—ain't I?

Bill. If you're good, Jim, an' don't forget yer prayers.

Jack. My eye! it's as good as a penny gaff! Go it, Bill.

Bill. Then I up an' addresses 'em: "My Lords an' Gen'lemen, 'cos as how ye're all good boys, an' goes to church, an' don't eat *too* many wittles, an' don't take off your bracelets when you goes to bed, you shall obswerve me eat."

Jim. Go it, Bill! I likes you, Bill.

Bill. No, Jim; I must close. The imagination is a 'ungry gift, as the cock said when he bolted the pebbles. Let's sojourn the meetin'.

Jack. Yes; come along. 'Tain't a com-f'able corner this yere: the wind cuts round uncommon sharp. Them pies ain't good—leastways not to look at.

Bill. They ain't disgestible. But look ye here, Jack and Jim—hearkee, my kids. (*Puts an arm round the neck of each, and whispers first to one and then to the other.*)

Enter MATTIE *and* SUSAN.

Sus. Now, Mattie, we're close to the house, an' I don't want to be seen with you, for she's mad at *me.*

Mat. You must have made her mad, then, Sue.

Sus. She madded me first: what else when she wouldn't believe a word I said? She'd ha' sworn on the gospel book, we sent the parcel up the spout. But she'll believe *you,* an' give you something, and then we'll have a chop!

Mat. How can you expect that, Sue, when the work's lost?

Sus. Never mind; you go and see.

Mat. I shan't take it, Susan. I couldn't.

Sus. Stuff and nonsense! I'll wait you round the corner: I don't like the smell o' them pastry things.

Exit. MATTIE *walks past the window.*

Mat. I don't like going. It makes me feel a thief to be suspected.

Bill. Lor! it's our Mattie! There's our Mattie!—Mattie! Mattie!

Mat. Ah, Bill! you're there—are you?

Bill. Yes, Mattie. It's a tart-show. You walks up and takes yer chice;—leastways, you makes it: somebody else takes it.

Mat. Wouldn't you like to *take* your choice sometimes, Bill?

Bill. In course I would.

Mat. Then why don't you work, and better yourself a bit?

Bill. Bless you, Mattie! myself is werry comf'able. He never complains.

Mat. You're hungry sometimes,—ain't you?

Bill. Most remarkable 'ungry, Mattie—this werry moment. Odd you should ask now—ain't it?

Mat. You would get plenty to eat if you would work.

Bill. Thank you—I'd raythor not. Them as ain't 'ungry never enj'ys their damaged tarts. If I'm 'appy, vere's the odds? as the cat said to the mouse as wanted to be let off the engagement. Why should I work more'n any other gen'leman?

Mat. A gentleman that don't work is a curse to his neighbours, Bill.

Bill. Bless you, Mattie! I ain't a curse—nohow to nobody. I don't see as you've got any call to say that, Mattie. I don't go fakin' clies, or crackin' cribs—nothin' o' the sort. An' I don't mind doin' of a odd job, if it *is* a odd one. Don't go for to say that again, Mattie.

Mat. I won't, then, Bill. But just look at yourself!—You're all in rags.

Bill. Rags is the hairier, as the Skye terrier said to the black-an'-tan.—I shouldn't object to a new pair of old trousers, though.

Mat. Why don't you have a pair of real new ones? If you would only sweep a crossing——

Bill. There ain't a crossin' but what's took. Besides, my legs ain't put together for one place all day long. It ain't to be done, Mattie. They can't do it.

Mat. There's the shoe-black business, then.

Bill. That ain't so bad, acause you can shoulder your box and trudge. But if it's all the same to you, Mattie, I'd raythe enj'y life: they say it's short.

Mat. But it ain't the same to me. It's so bad for you to be idle, Bill!

Bill. Not as I knows on. I'm tollable jolly, so long's I gets the browns for my bed.

Mat. Wouldn't you like a bed with a blanket to it?

Bill. Well, yes—if it was guv to me. But

I don't go in for knocking of yourself about, to sleep warm.

Mat. Well, look here, Bill. It's all Susan and I can do to pay for our room, and get a bit of bread and a cup of tea. It ain't enough.—If you were to earn a few pence now——

Bill. Oh golly! I never thought o' that. What a hass I wur, to be sure! I'll go a shoe-blackin' to-morror—I will.

Mat. Did you ever black a shoe, Bill?

Bill. I tried a boot oncet—when Jim wor a blackin' for a day or two. But I made nothink on it—nothink worth mentionin'. The blackin' or som'at was wrong. The gen-'leman said it wur coal-dust, an' he'd slog me, an' adwised me to go an' learn my trade.

Mat. And what did you say to that?

Bill. Holler'd out "Shine yer boots!" as loud as I could holler.

Mat. You must try my boots next time you come.

Bill. This wery night, Mattie. I'll make 'em shine like plate glass—see then if I don't. But where'll I get a box and brushes ?

Mat. You shall have our brushes and my footstool.

Bill. I see ! Turn the stool upside down, put the brushes in, and carry it by one leg—as drunken Moll does her kid.—Here you are, sir ! Black your boots, sir ?—Shine your trotters, sir ? (*bawling.*)

Mat. That'll do ; that'll do, Bill ! Famous ! You needn't do it again (*holding her ears*). Would you like a tart ?

Bill. Just wouldn't I, then !—Shine your booooots !

Mat. (*laughing*). Do hold your tongue, Bill. There's a penny for a tart.

Bill. Thank you, Mattie. Thank you.

Exit into the shop.

Jack and Jim (*touching their supposed caps*). Please, ma'am ! Please, ma'am ! I likes 'em too. I likes 'em more 'n Bill.

Mat. I'm very sorry, but—(*feeling in her pocket*) I've got a ha'penny, I believe. No—there's a penny! You must share it, you know. (*Gives it to Jack. Knocks at Mrs. Clifford's door.*)

Jack and Jim. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, ma'am.

Exit MATTIE *into* MRS. CLIFFORD'S.

Jim. Now, Jack, what's it to be?

Jack. I believe I shall spend it in St. Martin's Lane.

Jim. A ha'p'orth on it's mine, you know, Jack.

Jack. Well, you do put the stunners on me!

Jim. She said we wos to divide it—she did.

Jack. 'Taint possible. It beats my ivories. (*He pretends to bite it.* JIM *flies at him in a rage.*)

Re-enter BILL, *with his mouth full.*

Bill. Now what are you two a squabblin'

over? Oh! Jack's got a yennep, and Jim's lookin' shirty.

Jim. She told him to divide it, and he won't.

Bill. Who told him?

Jim. Mattie.

Bill. You dare, Jack? Hand over.

Jack. Be hanged if I do.

Bill. Then do and be hanged. (*A struggle.*) There, Jim! Now you go and buy what you like.

Jim. Am I to give Jack the half?

Bill. Yes, if our Mattie said it.

Jim. All right, Bill. (*Goes into the shop.*)

Jack. I owe you one for that, Bill.

Bill. Owe it me then, Jack. I do like fair play—always did (*eating*).

Jack. You ain't a sharin' of *your* yennep, Bill.

Bill. Mattie didn't say I was to. She knowed one wouldn't break up into three nohow. 'Tain't in natur', Jack.

Jack. You might ha' guv me a bite, anyhow, Bill.

Bill. It ain't desirable, Jack—size o' trap dooly considered. Here comes your share.

Re-enter JIM. *Gives a bun to* JACK.

Jim. I tell you what, Bill—she ain't *your* Mattie. She ain't nobody's Mattie; she's a hangel.

Bill. No, Jim, she ain't a hangel; she 'ain't got no wings, leastways outside her clo'es, and she 'ain't got clo'es enough to hide 'em. I wish I wos a hangel!

Jack. At it again, Bill! I *do* like to hear Bill a wishin' of hisself! Why, Bill?

Bill. Acause they're never 'ungry.

Jack. How do you know they ain't?

Bill. You never sees 'em loafin' about nowheres.

Jim. Is Mattie your sister, Bill?

Bill. No, Jim; I ain't good 'nough to have a sister like she.

Jack. Your sweetheart, Bill? Ha! ha! ha!

Bill. Dry up, Jack.

Jim. Tell me about her, Bill. *I* didn't jaw you.

Bill. She lives in our court, Jim. Makes shirts and things.

Jack. Oh! ho!

BILL *hits* JACK. JACK *doubles himself up.*

Bill. Jim, our Mattie ain't like other gals; I never see her out afore this blessed day — upon my word and honour, Jim, never!

Jack (*wiping his nose with his sleeve*). You don't know a joke from a jemmy, Bill.

Bill. I'll joke you!—A hangel tips you a tart, and you plucks her feathers! Get on t'other side of the way, you little dirty devil, or I'll give you another smeller—cheap too. Off with you!

Jack. No, Bill; no, please. I'm wery sorry. I ain't so bad's all that comes to.

Bill. If you wants to go with Jim and me, then behave like a gen'leman.

Jim. I calls our Mattie a brick!

Bill. None o' *your* jaw, Jim! She ain't *your* Mattie.

Enter THOMAS.

Tho. Childer, dun yo know th' way to Paradise—Row, or Road, or summat?

Bill. Dunnow, sir. You axes at the Sunday-school.

Tho. Wheer's th' Sunday-school, chylt?

Bill. Second door round the corner, sir.

Tho. Second dur reawnd th' corner! Which corner, my man?

Bill. Round *any* corner. Second door 's all-ways Sunday-school. (*Takes a sight. Exeunt boys.*)

THOMAS *sits down on a door-step.*

Tho. Eh, but aw be main weary! Surely th' Lord dunnot be a forsakin' ov mo. There's that abeawt th' lost ship. Oop yon, wheer

th' angels keep greight flocks ov 'em, they dunnot like to lose one ov 'em, an' they met well be helpin' ov mo to look for mo lost lamb i' this awful plaze! What has th' shepherd o' th' sheep himsel' to do, God bless him! but go look for th' lost ones and carry 'em whoam! O Lord! gie mo mo Mattie. Aw'm a silly ship mosel, a sarchin' for mo lost lamb. (*Boys begin to gather and stare.*) She's o' the world to me. O Lord, hear mo, and gie mo mo Mattie. Nea, aw'll geet oop, and go look again. (*Rises.*)

First Boy. Ain't he a cricket, Tommy?

Second Boy. Spry, ain't he? Prod him, and see him jump. (*General insult.*)

Tho. Why, childer, what have aw done, that yo cry after mo like a thief?

First Boy. Daddy Longlegs! Daddy Longlegs!

They hustle and crowd him. Re-enter BILL. THOMAS *makes a rush. They run. He seizes* BILL. *They gather again.*

Tho. Han yo getten a mother, lad?

Bill. No, thank ye. 'Ain't got no mother. Come of a haunt, I do.

First Boy. Game!—ain't he?

Tho. Well, aw'll tak yo whoam to yor aunt—aw wull.

Bill. Will you now, old chap? Wery well. (*Squats.*)

Tho. (*holding him up by the collar, and shaking his stick over him*). Tell mo wheer's yor aunt, or aw'll breyk every bone i' yor body.

Bill (*wriggling and howling and rubbing his eyes with alternate sleeves*). Let me go, I say. Let me go and I'll tell ye. I will indeed, sir.

Tho. (*letting go*). Wheer then, mo lad?

Bill (*starting up*). I' the church-cellar, sir—first bin over the left—feeds musty, and smells strong. Ho! ho! ho! (*Takes a sight.*)

THOMAS *makes a dart.* BILL *dodges him.*

First Boy. Ain't he a cricket *now*, Tommy?

Second Boy. Got one leg too many for a cricket, Sam.

Third Boy. That's what he jerks hisself with, Tommy.

Tho. Boys, I want to be freens wi' yo. Here's a penny.

One of the boys knocks it out of his hand. A scramble.

Tho. Now, boys, dun yo know wheer's a young woman bi th' name ov Mattie—somewheer abeawt Paradise Row?

First Boy. Yes, old un.

Second Boy. Lots on 'em.

Third Boy. Which on em' do you want, Mr. Cricket?

Fourth Boy. You ain't peticlar, I s'pose, old corner-bones?

First Boy. Don't you fret, old stilts. We'll find you a Mattie. There's plenty on 'em—all nice gals.

Tho. I want mo own Mattie.

First Boy. Why, you'd never tell one from t'other on 'em!

Third Boy. All on 'em wery glad to see old Daddy Longlegs!

Tho. Oh dear! Oh dear! What an awful plaze this Lon'on do be! To see the childer so bad!

Second Boy. Don't cry, gran'pa. *She*'d chaff you worser 'n us! We're only poor little innocent boys. We don't know nothink, bless you! Oh no!

First Boy. You'd better let her alone, arter all, bag o' nails.

Second Boy. *She*'ll have it out on you now, for woppin' of her when she wor a kid.

First Boy. She's a wopper herself now.

Third Boy. Mighty fine, with your shirt for a great-coat. He! he! he!

Fourth Boy. Mattie never kicks us poor innocent boys—cos we 'ain't got no mothers to take our parts. Boo hoo!

Enter JACK—*his hands in his pockets.*

Jack. What's the row, Bill?

Bill. Dunnow, Jack. Old chap collared me when I wasn't alludin' to him. He's after some Mattie or other. It can't be our Mattie. *She* wouldn't never have such a blazin' old parient as that.

Jack. Supposin' it was your Mattie, Bill, would you split, and let Scull-and-cross-bones nab her?

Bill. Would I? Would I 'and over our Mattie to her natural enemy? Did you ax it, Jack?

Jack. Natural enemy! My eye, Bill! what words you fakes!

Bill. Ain't he her natural enemy, then? Ain't it yer father as bumps yer 'ed, an' cusses ye, an' lets ye see him eat? Afore he gets our Mattie, I'll bite!

Tho. Poor lad! poor lad! Dunnot say that! Her feyther's th' best freen' hoo's getten. Th' moor's th' pity, for it's not mich he can do for her. But he would dee for her —he would.

Boys (*all together*). Go along, Daddy-devil!
Pick yer own bones, an' ha' done.
Rag-raker!
Skin-cat!
Bag o' nails!
Scull-an'-cross-bones!

"Old Daddy Longlegs wouldn't say his prayers—
Take him by his left leg, and throw him downstairs."

Go along! Go to hell!
We'll skin you.
Melt ye down for taller, we will.
Only he 'ain't got none, the red herrin'!

They throw things at him. He sits down on the door-step, and covers his head with his arms. Enter COL. G. *Boys run off.*

Tho. Oh, mo Mattie! mo Mattie!

Col. G. Poor old fellow! Are you hurt?

Tho. Eh! *yo* be a followin' ov mo too!

Col. G. What are you doing here?

Tom. What am aw doin' yere! Thee knows well enough what aw're a doin' yere. It 're o' thy fau't, mon.

Col. G. Why, you've got a blow! Your head is cut! Poor old fellow!

Tho. Never yo mind mo yed.

Col. G. You must go home.

Tho. Goo whoam, says to! Aw goo nowheers but to th' grave afoor aw've feawnd mo chylt.

Col. G. Come along with me; I will do all I can to find her. Perhaps I can help you after all.

Tho. Aw mak nea deawbt o' that, mon. And thae seems a gradely chap. Aw'm a'most spent. An' aw'm sick, sick! Dunnot let th' boys shove mo abeawt again.

Col. G. I will not. They shan't come near you. Take my arm. Poor old fellow! If you would but trust me! Hey! Cab there!

Exeunt.

Enter SUSAN, *peeping.*

Sus. I wonder whatever's come to Mattie! It's long time she was out again.

Enter MATTIE, *hurriedly.*

Mat. Oh, Susan! Susan! (*Falls.*)

Sus. Mattie! Mattie! (*Kneels beside her, and undoes her bonnet.*)

Enter POLICEMAN.

Pol. What ails her? (*Goes to lift her.*)

Sus. Leave her alone, will you? Let her head down. Get some water.

Pol. Drunk—is she?

Sus. Hold your tongue, you brute! If she'd a satin frock on, i'stead o' this here poor cotton gownd, you'd ha' showed her t'other side o' your manners! Get away with you. You're too ugly to look at.—Mattie! Mattie! Look up, child.

Pol. She mustn't lie there.

Mat. Susan!

Pol. Come, my girl.

Sus. You keep off, I tell you! Don't touch her. She's none o' your sort. Come, Mattie, dear.—Why don't you make 'em move on?

Pol. You'd better keep a civil tongue in your head, young woman.

Sus. You live lobster!

Pol. I'll have to lock you up, I see. One violent. T'other incapable.

Sus. You're another. Mattie, my dear, come along home.

Pol. That's right; be off with you.

MATTIE *rises.*

Mat. Let's go, Sue! Let's get farther off.

Sus. You can't walk, child. If I hadn't been so short o' wittles for a week, I could ha' carried you. But it's only a step to the cook-shop.

Mat. No money, Sue. (*Tries to walk.*)

Sus. O Lord! What *shall* I do! And that blue-bottle there a buzzin' an' a starin' at us like a dead codfish!—Boh!

Enter BILL.

Bill. Our Mattie! Gracious! what's the row, Susan?

Sus. She ain't well. Take her other arm, Bill, and help her out o' this. We ain't in no Christian country. Pluck up, Mattie, dear.

Bill. Come into the tart-shop. I'm a customer.

They go towards the shop. Exit POLICEMAN.

Mat. No, no, Sukey! I can't abide the smell of it. Let me sit on the kerb for a minute. (*Sits down.*) Oh, father! father!

Bill. Never you mind, Mattie! If he wor twenty fathers, he shan't come near ye.

Mat. Oh, Bill! if you could find him for me! He would take me home.

Bill. Now who'd ha' thought o' that? Axially wantin' her own father! I'd run far enough out o' the way o' mine—an' farther if he wur a-axin' arter me.

Mat. Oh me! my side!

Sus. It's hunger, poor dear! (*Sits down beside her.*)

Bill (*aside*). This won't do, Bill! I'm ashamed o' *you*, Bill! *Exit.*

Mat. No, Susan, it's not hunger. It's the old story, Sue.

Sus. Mattie! I never! You don't mean to go for to tell me you're a breakin' of your precious heart about *him?* It's not your gentleman sure*ly*! It's not *him* ye're turnin' sick about, this time o' day?

MATTIE *nods her head listlessly.*

Sus. What's up fresh, then? You was pretty bobbish when you left me. It's little he thinks of *you*, I'll be bound.

Mat. That's true enough. It's little he ever thought of me. He *did* say he loved me, though. It's fifty times he did!

Sus. Lies, lies, Mattie—all lies!

Mat. No, Susan; it wasn't lies. He meant it—at the time. That's what made it look all right. Oh dear! Oh dear!

Sus. But what's come to you now, Mattie? What's fresh in it? You're not turned like this all at once for nothink!

Mat. I've seen him!

Sus. Seen him! Oh, my! I wish it had been me. *I*'d ha' seen him! I'd ha' torn his ugly eyes out.

Mat. They ain't ugly eyes. They're big and blue, and they sparkle so when he talks to her!

Sus. And who's *her?* Ye didn't mention a *her*. Some brazen-faced imperence!

Mat. No. The young lady at Mrs. Clifford's.

Sus. Oho! See if I do a stitch for her! —Shan't I leave a needle in *her* shimmy, just!

Mat. What *shall* I do! All the good's gone out of me! And such a pain here!

Sus. Keep in yer breath a minute, an' push yer ribs out. It's one on 'em's got a top o' the other.

Mat. Such a grand creature! And her colour coming and going like the shadows on the corn! It's no wonder he forgot poor me. But it'll burn itself out afore long.

Sus. Don't ye talk like that, Mattie; I can't abear it.

Mat. If I was dressed like her, though, and could get my colour back! But laws! I'm *such* a washed out piece o' goods beside her!

Sus. That's as I say, Matilda! It's the dress makes the differ.

Mat. No, Susan, it ain't. It's the free look of them—and the head up—and the white hands—and the taper fingers. They're stronger than us, and they're that trained like, that all their body goes in one, like the music at a concert. *I* couldn't pick up a needle without going down on my knees after it. It's the pain in my side, Sue.—Yes, it's a fine thing to be born a lady. It's *not* the clothes, Sue. If we was dressed ever so, we couldn't come near them. It's that look,—I don't know what.

Sus. Speak for yerself, Mattie; *I*'m not a goin' to think such small beer of *my*self, *I*

can tell you! I believe if I'd been took in time——

Mat. It's a big *if* that though, Sue.—And then she looked *so* good! You'd hardly think it of me,—perhaps it's because I'm dying—but for one minute I could ha' kissed her very shoes. Oh, my side!

Sus. (*putting her arm tight round her waist*). Does that help it Mattie, dear?—a little teeny bit?

Mat. Yes, Sukey. It holds it together a bit. Will he break her heart too, I wonder?

Sus. No fear o' that! Ladies takes care o' theirselves. They're brought up to it.

Mat. It's only poor girls gentlemen don't mind hurting, I suppose.

Sus. It's the ladies' fathers and brothers, Mattie! We've got nobody to look after us.

Mat. They may break their hearts, though, for all that.

Sus. They won't forgive them like you, then, Mattie!

Mat. I dare say they're much the same as we are when it comes to that, Sue.

Sus. Don't say *me*, Mattie. *I* wouldn't forgive him—no, not if I was to die for it. But what came of it, child?

Mat. I made some noise, I suppose, and the lady started.

Sus. And then you up and spoke?

Mat. I turned sick, and fell down.

Sus. Poor dear!

Mat. She got me a glass of wine, but I couldn't swallow it, and got up and crawled out.

Sus. Did he see you?

Mat. I think he did.

Sus. You'll tell her, in course?

Mat. No, Sue; he'd hate me, and I couldn't bear that. Oh me! my side! It's so bad!

Sus. Let's try for home, Mattie. It's a long way, and there's nothing to eat when you're there; but you can lie down, and that's everything to them as can't sit up.

Mat. (*rising*). I keep fancying I'm going to meet my father.

Sus. Let's fancy it then every turn all the way home, an' that'll get us along. There, take my arm. There!—Come along. *Exeunt.*

Slow music. Twilight.

Enter BILL *with a three-legged stool, brushes, etc.*

Bill. Come! it's blackin' all over! When gents can't no longer see their boots, 'tain't much use offerin' to shine 'em. But if I can get a penny, I will. I *must* take a tart to Mattie, or this here damaged one (*laying his hand on his stomach*) won't go to sleep this night.

Enter WATERFIELD.

Bill. Black your boots for a party, sir?

Wat. (*aside*) The very rascal I saw her speaking to! But wasn't she a brick not to split! That's what I call devotion now! There *are* some of them capable of it. I'll set her up for life. I'd give a cool thousand

it hadn't happened, though. I saw her father too hanging about Gervaise's yesterday.

Bill. Clean your boots, sir? Shine 'em till they grin like a Cheshire cat eatin' cheese!

Wat. Shine away, you beggar.

Bill (*turning up his trousers*). I ain't no beggar, sir. Shine for a shiner's fair play.

Wat. Do you live in this neighbourhood?

Bill. No, sir.

Wat. Where, then?

Bill (*feeling where a pocket should be*). I don't appear to 'ave a card about me, sir, but my address is Lamb's Court, Camomile Street —leastways I do my sleepin' not far off of it. I've lived there, what livin' I *have* done, sin' ever I wor anywheres as I knows on.

Wat. Do you happen to know a girl of the name of Pearson?

Bill. No, sir. I can't say as how I rec'lect the name. Is she a old girl or a young un?

Wat. You young liar! I saw you talking to her not two hours ago!

Bill. Did ye now, sir? That's odd, ain't it? Bless you! I talks to everybody. I ain't proud, sir.

Wat. Well, do you see this? (*holding up a sovereign*).

Bill. That's one o' them things what don't require much seein', sir. There! Bright as a butterfly! T'other twin, sir!

Wat. I'll give you this, if you'll do something for me—and another to that when the thing's done.

Bill. 'Tain't stealin', sir?

Wat. No.

Bill. Cos, you see, Mattie——

Wat. Who did you say?

Bill. Old Madge as lets the beds at tuppence a short night. 'Tain't stealin', you say, sir?

Wat. What do you take me for? I want you to find out for me where the girl Pearson lives—that's all.

Bill (*snatching the sovereign and putting it*

in his mouth). Now then, sir!—What's the young woman like?

Wat. Rather tall—thin—dark hair—large dark eyes—and long white hands. Her name's Matilda—Mattie Pearson—the girl you were talking to, I tell you, on this very spot an hour or two ago.

Bill (*dropping the sovereign, and stooping to find it*). Golly! it *is* our Mattie!

Wat. Shall you know her again?

Bill. Any boy as wasn't a hass would know his own grandmother by them spots. Besides, I remember sich a gal addressin' of me this mornin'. If you say her it was, I'll detect her for ye.

Wat. There's a good boy! What's your name?

Bill. Timothy, sir.

Wat. What else?

Bill. Never had no other—leastways as I knows on.

Wat. Well, Timothy—there's the other

sov.—and it's yours the moment you take me to her. Look at it.

Bill. My eye!—Is she a square Moll, sir?

Wat. What do you mean by that?

Bill. Green you are, to be sure!—She ain't one as steals, or——

Wat. Not she. She's a sempstress—a needlewoman, or something of the sort.

Bill. And where shall I find *you*, sir?

Wat. Let me see:—to-morrow night—on the steps of St. Martin's Church—ten o'clock.

Bill. But if I don't find her? It may be a week—or a month—or——

Wat. Come whether you find her or not, and let me know.

Bill. All serene, sir! There you are, sir! Brush your trousers, sir?

Wat. No; leave 'em.—Don't forget now.

Bill. Honour bright, sir! Not if I knows it, sir!

Wat. There's that other skid, you know.

Bill. All right, sir! Anything more, sir?

Wat. Damn your impudence! Get along.

Exit. BILL *watches him into* MRS. CLIFFORD'S.

Bill. Now by all the 'ungry gums of Arabiar, 'ere's a swell arter our Mattie!—A right rig'lar swell! I knows 'em—soverings an' red socks. What's come to our Mattie? 'Ere's Daddy Longlegs arter her, vith his penny and his blessin'! an' 'ere's this 'ere mighty swell vith his soverings—an' his red socks! An' she's 'ungry, poor gal!—This 'ere yellow-boy?—I 'ain't got no faith in swells—no more 'n in Daddy Longlegses—I 'ain't!—S'posin' he wants to marry her?—Not if I knows it. He ain't half good 'nough for *her.* Too many quids—goin' a flingin' on 'em about like buttons! He's been a crackin' o' cribs—*he* has. I ain't a goin' to interduce our Mattie to no sich blokes as him. No fathers or lovyers for me—says I!—But this here pebble o' Paradise!—What's to be done wi' the cherub? I can't tell *her* a lie about

it, an' who'll break it up for a cove like me, lookin' jes' as if I'd been an' tarred myself and crep' through a rag-bag! They'd jug me. An' what 'ud Mattie say then? I wish I 'adn't 'a' touched it. I'm blowed if I don't toss it over a bridge!—Then the gent 'ain't got the weight on his dunop out o' me. O Lord! what *shall* I do with it? I wish I'd skied it in his face! I don't believe it's a good un; I don't! (*Bites it.*) It do taste wery nasty. It's nothin' better 'n a gilt fardin'! Jes' what a cove might look for from sich a swell! (*Goes to a street lamp and examines it.*) Lor! there's a bobby! (*Exit. Re-enter to the lamp.*) I wish the gen'leman 'ad guv me a penny. I can't do nothin' wi' this 'ere quid. Vere am I to put it? I 'ain't got no pocket, an' if I was to stow it in my 'tato-trap, I couldn't wag my red rag—an' Mother Madge 'ud soon have me by the chops. Nor I've got noveres to plant it.—O Lor! it's all I've got, an' Madge lets nobody

go to bed without the tuppence. It's all up with Bill—*for* the night!—Where's the odds! —there's a first-class hotel by the river—The Adelphi Arches, they calls it—where they'll take me in fast enough, and I can go to sleep with it in my cheek. Coves is past talkin' to you there. Nobody as sees me in that 'ere 'aunt of luxury, 'ill take me for a millionaire vith a skid in his mouth. 'Tain't a bit cold to-night neither (*going*).—Vy do they say a *aunt* of luxury? I s'pose acause she's wife to my uncle. *Exit.*

Slow music. The night passes. A police-man crosses twice. THOMAS *crosses be-tween. Dawn.*

Re-enter BILL.

Bill. I'm hanged if this here blasted quid ain't a burnin' of me like a red-hot fardin'! I'm blest if I've slep' more 'n half the night. I woke up oncet, with it a slippin' down red lane. I wish I had swallered it. Then no-

body 'd 'a' ast me vere I got it. I don't wonder as rich coves turn out sich a bad lot. I believe the devil's in this 'ere!

Knocks at MRS. CLIFFORD'S *door.* JAMES *opens. Is shutting it again.* BILL *shoves in his stool.*

Bill. Hillo, Blazes! where's your manners? Is that the way you behaves to callers on your gov'nor's business?

James (*half opening the door*). Get about your own business, you imperent boy!

Bill. I'm about it now, young man. I wants to see your gov'nor.

James. You've got business with *him*, have you, eh?

Bill. Amazin' precoxity! You've hit it! I *have* got business with *him*, Door-post—not in the wery smallest with *you*, Door-post!—essep' the knife-boy's been and neglected of your feet-bags this mornin'. (JAMES *would slam the door.* BILL *shoves in his stool.*) Don't you try that 'ere little game again, young

man! for if I loses my temper and takes to hollerin', you'll wish yourself farther.

James. A humbug you are! I 'ain't got no gov'nor, boy. The master as belongs to me is a mis'ess.

Bill. Then that 'ere gen'lemen as comes an' goes, ain't your master—eh?

James. What gen'leman, stoopid?

Bill. Oh! it don't matter.

James. What *have—you—got* to say to *him?*

Bill. Some'at pickled: it'll keep.

James. I'll give him a message, if you like.

Bill. Well, you may tell him the bargain's hoff, and if he wants his money, it's a waitin' of him round the corner.

James. You little blackguard! Do you suppose a gen'leman's a goin' to deliver sich a message as that! Be off, you himp! (*Makes a dart at him.*)

Bill (*dodging him*). How d'e do, Clumsy?

Don't touch me; I ain't nice. Why, what was you made for, Parrot? Is them calves your own rearin' now? Is that a quid or a fardin? Have a shot, now, Shins.

James. None o' your imperence, young blackie! 'And me over the money, and I'll give it to the gen'leman.

Bill. Do you see anything peticlar green in my eye, Rainbow?

JAMES *makes a rush.* BILL *gets down before him.* JAMES *tumbles over him.* BILL *blacks his face with his brush.*

Bill (*running a little way*). Ha! ha! ha! Bill Shoeblack—his mark! Who's blackie now? You owes me a penny—twopence—'twor sich a ugly job! Ain't shiny? I'll come back and shine ye for another penny. Good mornin', Jim Crow! Take my adwice, and don't on no account apply your winegar afore you've opened your hoyster. Likeways: Butter don't melt on a cold tater. *Exit.*

Exit JAMES *into the house, banging the door.*

Enter WATERFIELD, *followed by* BILL.

Bill. Please, sir, I been a watchin' for you.

Wat. Go to the devil!

Bill. I'd raythe not. So there's your suv'-ring!

Wat. Go along. Meet me where I told you.

Bill. I won't. There's yer skid.

Wat. Be off, or I'll give you in charge. Hey! Policeman! *Exit.*

Bill. Well, I'm blowed! This quid 'll be the hangin' o' me! *Damn you!* (*Throws it fiercely on the ground and stamps on it.*) Serves me right for chaffin' the old un! He didn't look a bad sort—*for* a gov'nor.—Now I reflexes, I heerd Mattie spoony on some father or other, afore. O Lord! I'll get Jim and Jack to help me look out for him. (*Enter* THOMAS.) Lor' ha' mussy!—talk o' the old un!—I'm wery peticlar glad as I found you, daddy. I been a lookin' for yè—leastways I

was a goin' to look for ye this wery moment as you turns up. I chaffed you like a zorologicle monkey yesterday, daddy, an' I'm wery sorry. But you see fathers ain't nice i' this 'ere part o' the continent. (*Enter* JAMES, *in plain clothes, watching them.*) They ain't no good nohow to nobody. If *I* wos a husband and a father, I don't know as how I should be A One, myself. P'r'aps I might think it wur my turn to break arms and legs. I knowed more 'n one father as did. It's no wonder the boys is a plaguy lot, daddy.

Tho. Goo away, boy. Dosto yer, aw've seen so mich wickedness sin' aw coom to Lon'on, that aw dunnot knaw whether to breighk thi yed, or to goo wi' tho? There be thieves and there be robbers.

Bill. Never fear, daddy. You ain't worth robbin' of, I don't think.

Tho. How dosto knaw that? Aw've moore 'n I want to lose abeawt mo.

Bill. Then Mattie 'ill have som'at to eat—will she, daddy?

Tho. Som'at to eight, boy! Be mo Mattie hungry—dun yo think?

Bill. Many and many's the time, daddy.

Tho. Yigh—afore her dinner!

Bill. And after it too, daddy.

Tho. O Lord!—And what does hoo do when hoo 's hungry?

Bill. Grins and bears it. Come and see her, daddy?

Tho. O Lord! Mo Mattie, an' nothin' to eight! Goo on, boy. Aw'm beawn to follow yo. Tak mo wheer yo like. Aw'll goo.

Bill. Come along then, daddy.

James (*collaring him*). Hullo, young un! You're the rascal as stole the suvering: *I* saw you!

Bill. Dunno what you're up to. I never stole nothink.

James. Oh no! of course not! What's

that in yer fist now? (*Catches* BILL'S *hand, and forces it open.*) There!

BILL *drops his stool on* JAMES'S *foot, throws up the coin, catches it with his other hand, and puts it in his mouth.*

Tho. Theighur! Theighur! The like ov that! Aw're agooin wi' a thief—aw wur!

Bill. Never you mind, daddy. It wur guv to me.

James. That's what they allus says, sir.—You come along.—I'd be obliged to you, sir, if you would come too, and say you saw him.

Tho. Nay! aw connot say aw seigh him steyle it.

James. You saw it in his hand.

Tho. Yigh! aw did.

Bill. It was guv to me, I tell ye.

James. Honest boy, this one! Looks like it, don't he, sir? What do you think of yourself, you young devil, a decoying of a grey-haired old gen'leman like this? Why,

sir, him an' his pals 'ud ha' taken every penny you had about you! Murdered you, they might—I've knowed as much. It's a good thing I 'appened on the spot.—Come along, you bad boy!

Bill. I didn't take it. And I won't go.

James. Come along. They'll change it for you at the lock-up.

Bill. You didn't see me steal it! You ain't never a goin' to gi' me in charge?

James. Wrong again, young un! That's percisely what I *am* a goin' to do!

Bill. Oh, sir! please, sir! I'm a honest boy. It's the Bible-truth. I'll kiss twenty books on it.

James. I won't ax you.—Why, sir, he ain't even one o' the shoe-brigade. He 'ain't got a red coat. Bless my soul! he 'ain't even got a box—nothin' but a scrubby pair o' brushes —as I'm alive! *He* ain't no shoeblack. He's a thief as purtends to black shoes, and picks pockets.

Bill. You're a liar! I never picked a pocket in my life.

James. Bad language, you see! What more would you have?

Tho. Who'd iver ha' thowt o' sich wickedness in a boy like that!

Bill. I ain't a wicked boy.

Tho. Nay, doan't thae tell mo that! Thae made gam of mo, and hurried and scurried mo, as iv aw'd been a mak ov a deevil—yo did.

James. He's one of the worst boys I know. This Timothy is one of the very worst boys in all London.

Bill (*aside*). *Timothy*, eh? I twigs! It's Rainbow, by Peter and Paul!—Look ye here, old gen'leman! This 'ere's a bad cove as is takin' adwantage o' your woolliness. *I* knows him. His master guv me the suvering. He guv it to me to tell him where your Mattie was.

James. Don't you fancy you're goin' to take in an experienced old gen'leman like that

with your cock-and-bull stories! Come along, I say. Hey! Police!

Bill. Here you are! (*Takes the coin from his mouth, rubs it dry on his jacket, and offers it.*) *I* don't want it. Give it to old Hunx there.—*He* shan't never see his Mattie! I wur right to chivy him, arter all.

James (*taking the coin*). Now look here, Timothy. I'm a detective hofficer. But I won't never be hard on no boy as wants to make a honest livin'. So you be hoff! I'll show the old gen'leman where he wants to go to.

BILL *moves two paces, and takes a sight at him.*

Tho. The Lord be praised! Dosto know eawr Mattie then?

James. It's the dooty of a detective hofficer to know every girl in his beat.

Bill. My eye! there's a oner!

Tho. Tak mo to her, sir, an' aw'll pray for yo.

James. I will.—If I cotch you nearer than Mile End, I'll give you in charge *at oncet.*

Bill (*bolting five yards*). He's a humbug, daddy! but he'll serve *you* right. He'll melt you down for taller. He ain't no 'tective. *I* know him.

Tho. Goo away.

Bill. Good-bye, daddy! *He* don't know your Mattie. Good-bye, skelington! *Exit.*

Tho. Eh! sech a boy!

James. Let me see. You want a girl of the name of Mattie?

Tho. Aw do, sir.

James. The name is not an oncommon one. There's Mattie Kent?

Tho. Nay; it's noan o' her.

James. Then there's Mattie Winchfield?

Tho. Nay; it's noan o' her.

James. Then there's Mattie Pearson?

Tho. Yigh, that's hoo! That's hoo! Wheer? Wheer?

James. Well, it's too far for a man of

your age to walk. But I'll call a cab, and we'll go comfortable.

Tho. But aw connot affoord to peigh for a cab—as yo co it.

James. You don't suppose I'm a goin' to put an honest man like you to expense!

Tho. It's but raysonable I should peigh. But thae knows best.

James. Hey! Cab there! *Exeunt.*

Re-enter BILL, *following them.*

Bill. I'll have an eye of him, though. The swell as give me the yellow-boy—he's his master! Poor old codger! He'll believe any cove but the one as tells him the truth! *Exit.*

Enter from the house MRS. CLIFFORD. *Enter from opposite side* COL. G.

Col. G. I was just coming to see you, Clara.

Mrs. C. And I was going to see you. How's Arthur to-day? I thought you would have come yesterday.

Col. G. My poor boy is as dependent on me as if I were *not* his father. I am very anxious about him. The fever keeps returning.

Mrs. C. Fortune seems to have favoured your mad scheme, Walter.

Col. G. Or something better than fortune.

Mrs. C. You have had rare and ample opportunity. You may end the farce when you please, and in triumph.

Col. G. On the contrary, Clara, it would be nothing but an anticlimax to end what you are pleased to call *the farce* now. As if I could make a merit of nursing my own boy! I did more for my black servant. I wish I had him here.

Mrs. C. You would like to double the watch—would you?

Col. G. Something has vexed you, Clara.

Mrs. C. I never liked the scheme, and I like it less every day.

Col. G. I have had no chance yet. He

has been ill all the time. I wish you would come and see him a little oftener.

Mrs. C. He doesn't want me. You are everything now. Besides, I can't come alone.

Col. G. Why not?

Mrs. C. Constance would fancy I did not want to take her.

Col. G. Then why not take her?

Mrs. C. I have my reasons.

Col. G. What are they?

Mrs. C. Never mind.

Col. G. I insist upon knowing them.

Mrs. C. It would break my heart, Walter, to quarrel with you, but I *will* if you use such an expression.

Col. G. But why shouldn't you bring Miss Lacordère with you?

Mrs. C. He's but a boy, and it might put some nonsense in his head.

Col. G. She's a fine girl. You make a friend of her.

Mrs. C. She's a good girl, and a lady-like girl; but I don't wan't to meddle with the bulwarks of society. I hope to goodness they will last *my* time.

Col. G. Clara, I begin to doubt whether pride *be* a Christian virtue.

Mrs. C. I see! You'll be a radical before long. *Every*thing is going that way.

Col. G. I don't care what I am, so I do what's right. I'm sick of all that kind of thing. What I want is bare honesty. I believe I'm a tory as yet, but I should be a radical to-morrow if I thought justice lay on that side.—If a man falls in love with a woman, why shouldn't he marry her?

Mrs. C. She may be unfit for him.

Col. G. How should he fall in love with her, then? Men don't fall in love with birds.

Mrs. C. It's a risk—a great risk.

Col. G. None the greater that he pleases himself, and all the more worth taking. I wish my poor boy——

Mrs. C. Your poor boy might please himself and yet not succeed in pleasing you, brother!

Col. G. (*aside*). She *knows* something.—I must go and see about his dinner. Good-bye, sister.

Mrs. C. Good-bye, then. You *will* have your own way!

Col. G. This once, Clara. *Exeunt severally.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*A garret-room.* MATTIE. SUSAN.

Mat. At the worst we've got to die some day, Sue, and I don't know but hunger may be as easy a way as another.

Sus. I'd rather have a choice, though. And it's not hunger I would choose.

Mat. There are worse ways.

Sus. Never mind: we don't seem likely to be bothered wi' choosin'.

Mat. There's that button-hole done. (*Lays down her work with a sigh, and leans back in her chair.*)

Sus. I'll take it to old Nathan. It'll be a chop a-piece. It's wonderful what a chop can do to hearten you up.

Mat. I don't think we ought to buy chops, dear. We must be content with bread, I think.

Sus. Bread, indeed!

Mat. Well, it's something to eat.

Sus. Do you call it eatin' when you see a dog polishin' a bone?

Mat. Bread's very good with a cup of tea.

Sus. Tea, indeed! Fawn-colour, trimmed with sky-blue!—If you'd mentioned lobster-salad and sherry, now!

Mat. I never tasted lobster-salad.

Sus. I have, though; and I do call lobster-salad good. You don't care about your wittles: *I* do. When I'm hungry, I'm not t all comfortable.

Mat. Poor dear Sue! There is a crust in the cupboard.

Sus. I *can't* eat crusts. I want summat nice. I ain't dyin' of 'unger. It's only I'm peckish. *Very* peckish, though. I could eat —let me see what I *could* eat:—I could eat

a lobster-salad, and two dozen oysters, and a lump of cake, and a wing and a leg of a chicken—if it was a spring chicken, with watercreases round it—and a Bath-bun, and a sandwich; and in fact I don't know what I couldn't eat, except just that crust in the cupboard. And I do believe I could drink a whole bottle of champagne.

Mat. I don't know what one of those things tastes like—scarce one; and I don't believe you do either.

Sus. Don't I?—I never did taste champagne, but I've seen them eating lobster-salad many a time;—girls not half so good-lookin' as you or me, Mattie, and fine gentlemen a waitin' upon 'em. Oh dear! I *am* so hungry! Think of having your supper with a real gentleman as talks to you as if you was fit to talk to—not like them Jew-tailors, as tosses your work about as if it dirtied their fingers—and them none so clean for all their fine rings!

Mat. I saw Nathan's Joseph in a pastry-cook's last Saturday, and a very pretty girl with him, poor thing!

Sus. Oh the hussy to let that beast pay for her!

Mat. I suppose she was hungry.

Sus. I'd die before I let a snob like that treat *me.* No, Mattie! I spoke of a *real* gentleman.

Mat. Are you sure you wouldn't take Nathan's Joseph for a gentleman if he was civil to you?

Sus. Thank you, miss! I know a sham from a real gentleman the moment I set eyes on him.

Mat. What do you mean by a real gentleman, Susan?

Sus. A gentleman as makes a lady of his girl.

Mat. But what sort of lady, Sue? The poor girl may fancy herself a lady, but only till she's left in the dirt. That sort of

gentleman makes fine speeches to your face, and calls you horrid names behind your back. Sue, dear, don't have a word to say to one of them—if he speaks ever so soft.

Sus. Lawks, Mattie! they ain't all one sort.

Mat. *You* won't have more than one sort to choose from. They may be rough or civil, good-natured or bad, but they're all the same in this, that not one of them cares a pin more for you than if you was a horse—no—nor half a quarter so much. Don't for God's sake have a word to say to one of them. If I die, Susan——

Sus. *If* you do, Matilda—if you go and do that thing, I'll take to gin—that's what I'll do. Don't say I didn't act fair, and tell you beforehand.

Mat. How can I help dying, Susan?

Sus. I say, Don't do it, Mattie. We'll fall out, if you do. Don't do it, Matilda—La! there's that lumping Bill again—*al*ways a

comin' up the stair when you don't want him!

Enter BILL.

Mat. Well, Bill, how have you been getting on?

Bill. Pretty tollol, Mattie. But I can't go on so. (*Holds out his stool.*) It ain't respectable.

Mat. What ain't respectable? Everything's respectable that's honest.

Bill. Why, who ever saw a respectable shiner goin' about with a three-legged stool for a blackin' box? It ain't the thing. The rig'lars chaffs me fit to throw it at their 'eads, they does—only there's too many on 'em, an' I've got to dror it mild. A box I must have, or a feller's ockypation's gone. Look ye here! One bob, one tanner, and a joey! There! that's what comes of never condescending to an 'a'penny.

Sus. Bless us! what mighty fine words we've got a waitin' on us!

Bill. If I 'ave a weakness, Miss Susan, it's for the right word in the right place—as the coster said to the devil-dodger as blowed him up for purfane swearin'.—When a gen'leman hoffers me an 'a'penny, I axes him in the purlitest manner I can assume, to oblige me by givin' of it to the first beggar he may 'ave the good fort'n to meet. *Some* on 'em throws down the 'a'penny. Most on 'em makes it a penny.—But I say, Mattie, you don't want nobody arter you—do you now?

Mat. I don't know what you mean by that, Bill.

Bill. You don't want a father—do you now? Do she, Susan?

Sus. We want no father a hectorin' here, Bill. You 'ain't seen one about, have you?

Bill. I seen a rig'lar swell arter Mattie, anyhow.

Mat. What *do* you mean, Bill?

Bill. A rig'lar swell—I repeats it—a astin' arter a young woman by the name o' Mattie.

Sus. (*pulling him aside*). Hold your tongue, Bill! You'll kill her! You young viper! Hold your tongue, or I'll twist your neck. Don't you see how white she is?

Mat. What was he like? Do tell me, Bill.

Bill. A long-legged rig'lar swell, with a gold chain, and a cane with a hivory 'andle.

Sus. He's a bad man, Bill, and Mattie can't abide him. If you tell him where she is, she'll never speak to you again.

Mat. Oh, Susan! what *shall* I do? Don't bring him here, Bill. I shall have to run away again; and I can't, for we owe a week's rent.

Sus. There, Bill!

Bill. Don't you be afeard, Mattie. He shan't touch you. Nor the old one neither.

Mat. There wasn't an old man with him? —not an old man with a long stick?

Bill. Not with *him.* Daddy was on his own hook?

Mat. It must have been my father, Susan. (*Sinks back on her chair.*)

Sus. 'Tain't the least likely.—There, Bill! I always said you was no good! You've killed her.

Bill. Mattie! Mattie! I didn't tell him where you was.

Mat. (*reviving*). Run and fetch him, Bill—there's a dear! Oh! how proud I've been! If mother did say a hard word, she didn't mean it—not for long. Run, Bill, run and fetch him.

Bill. Mattie, I was a fetchin' of him, but he wouldn't trust me. And didn't he cut up crusty, and collar me tight! He's a game old cock—he is, Mattie.

Mat. (*getting up and pacing about the room*). Oh, Susan! my heart 'll break. To think he's somewhere near and I can't get to him! Oh my side! *Don't* you know where he is, Bill?

Bill. He's someveres about, and blow me if I don't find him!—a respectable old party

in a white pinny, an' 'peared as if he'd go on a walkin' till he walked hisself up standin'. A scrumptious old party!

Mat. Had he a stick, Bill?

Bill. Yes—a knobby stick—leastways a stick wi' knobs all over it.

Mat. That's him, Susan!

Bill. I could swear to the stick. I was too near gittin' at the taste on it not to know it again.

Mat. When was it you saw him, Bill?

Bill. Yesterday, Mattie—jest arter you give me the tart. I sawr him again this mornin', but he wouldn't place no confidence in me.

Mat. Oh dear! Why didn't you come straight to me, Bill?

Bill. If I'd only ha' known as you wanted him! But that was sech a *un*likely thing! It's werry perwokin'! I uses my judgment, an' puts my hoof in it! I *am* sorry, Mattie. But I didn't know no better (*crying*).

Mat. Don't cry, Bill. You'll find him for me yet—won't you?

Bill. I'm off this indentical minute. But you see——

Sus. There! there!—now you mizzle. *I* don't want no fathers here — goodness knows; but the poor girl's took a fancy to hers, and she'll die if she don't get him. Run now—there's a good boy! (*Exit* BILL.) You 'ain't forgotten who's a comin', Mattie?

Mat. No, indeed.

Sus. Well, I hope she'll be civil, or I'll just give her a bit of my mind.

Mat. Not enough to change hers, I'm afraid. That sort of thing never does any good.

Sus. And am I to go a twiddlin' of my thumbs, and sayin' *yes, ma'am*, an' *no, ma'am?* Not if I knows it, Matilda!

Mat. You will only make her the more positive in her ill opinion of us.

Sus. An' what's that to me?

Mat. Well, I don't like to be thought a thief. Besides, Mrs. Clifford has been kind to us.

Sus. She's paid us for work done; so has old Nathan.

Mat. Did old Nathan ever give you a glass of wine when you took home his slops?

Sus. Oh! that don't cost much; and besides, she takes it out in kingdom-come.

Mat. You're unfair, Susan.

Sus. Well, it's little fairness I get.

Mat. And to set that right you're unfair yourself! What you call speaking your mind, is as cheap, and as nasty, as the worst shoddy old Nathan ever got gobble-stitched into coats and trousers.

Sus. Very well, Miss Matilda! (*rising and snatching her bonnet*). The sooner we part the better! You stick by your fine friends! I don't care *that* for them! (*snapping her fingers*)—and you may tell 'em so! I can make a livin' without them or you either.

Goodness gracious knows it ain't much of a livin' I've made sin' I come across *you*, Miss! *Exit.*

Mat. (*trying to rise*). Susan! Susan! (*Lays her head on the table*).

A tap at the door, and enter MRS. CLIFFORD, *with* JAMES *behind.* MATTIE *rises.*

Mrs. C. Wait on the landing, James.

James. Yes, ma'am.

Exit JAMES, *leaving the door a little ajar.*

Mrs. C. Well, Miss Pearson! (*Mattie offers a chair.*) No, thank you. That person is still with you, I see!

Mat. Indeed, ma'am, she's an honest girl.

Mrs. C. She is a low creature, and capable of anything. I advise you to get rid of her.

Mat. Was she rude on the stair, ma'am?

Mrs. C. Rude! Vulgar—quite vulgar! Insulting!

Mat. I am very sorry. But, believe me, ma'am, she is an honest girl, and never

pawned that work. It was done—every stitch of it; and the loss of the money is hard upon us too. Indeed, ma'am, she did lose the parcel.

Mrs. C. You have only her word for it. If you don't give *her* up, I give *you* up.

Mat. I can't, ma'am. She might go into bad ways if I did.

Mrs. C. She can't well get into worse. Her language! You would do ever so much better without her.

Mat. I daren't, ma'am. I should never get it off my conscience.

Mrs. C. Your conscience indeed! (*rising*). I wish you a good morning, Miss Pearson. —(*Sound of a blow, followed by scuffling.*)— What is that? I fear I have got into an improper place.

SUSAN *bursts in.*

Sus. Yes, ma'am, and that you have! It's a *wery* improper place for the likes o' you,

ma'am—as believes all sorts o' wicked things of people as is poor. Who are you to bring your low flunkies a-listenin' at honest girls' doors! (*Turning to James in the doorway.*) Get out, will you? Let me catch you here again, and I'll mark you that the devil wouldn't know his own! You dirty Paul Pry—you! (*Falls on her knees to Mattie.*) Mattie, you angel!

Mat. (*trying to make her get up*) Never mind. It's all right between you and me, Susan.

Mrs. C. I see! I thought as much!

Sus. (*starting up*) As much as what, then, my lady? Oh, *I* know you and your sort—well enough! We're the dirt under your feet—lucky if we stick to your shoes! But this room's mine.

Mrs. C. That linen was mine, young woman, I believe.

Sus. An' it's for that miserable parcel you come a-talkin', an' abusin' as no lady ought

to! How dare you look that angel in the face there an' say she stole it—which you're not fit to lace her boots for her! There!

Mat. Susan! Susan! do be quiet.

Sus. It's all very well for the likes o' me (*courtesying spitefully*)—which I'm no better'n I should be, and a great deal worse, if I'm on my oath to your ladyship—that's neither here nor there!—but *she*'s better'n a van-load o' sich ladies as you, pryin' into other people's houses, with yer bibles, an' yer religion, an' yer flunkies! *I* know ye! I *do!*

Mat. Don't, Susan.

Sus. Why don't ye go an' pay twopence a week to somebody to learn ye good manners? I been better brought up myself.

Mrs. C. I see I was wrong: I ought at once to have handed the matter over to the police.

Sus. The perlice, indeed!—You get out of this, ma'am, or I'll make you!—you and your cowardly man-pup there, as is afraid

to look me in the face through the crack o the door! Get out, I say, with your—*insolence*—that's your word!

Exit MRS. CLIFFORD.

Mat. Susan! Susan! what is to become of us?

Sus. She daren't do it—the old scrooge! But just let her try it on! See if I don't show her up afore the magistrate! Mattie! I'll work my fingers to the bone for you. I would do worse, only you won't let me. I'll go to the court, and tell the magistrate you're a-dyin' of hunger, which it's as true as gospel.

Mat. They'd send me to the workhouse, Sukey.

Sus. There *must* be some good people somewheres, Mattie.

Mat. Yes; if we could get at them. But we can live till we die, Sukey.

Sus. I'll go and list for a soldier, I will. Women ha' done it afore. It's quite re-

spectable, so long as they don't find you out —and they shouldn't me. There's ne'er a one o' the redcoats 'ill cut up rougher 'n I shall—barrin' the beard, and *that* don't go for much now-a-days.

Mat. And what should I do without you, Susan ?

Sus. Do you care to have me, then ?

Mat. That I do, indeed. But you shouldn't have talked like that to Mrs. Clifford. Ladies ain't used to such words. They sound worse than they are—quite dreadful, to them. She don't know your kind heart as I do. Besides, the *look* of things is against us. Ain't it now ? Say yourself.

Sus. (*starting up*) I'll go and beg her pardon. I'll go direckly—I will. I swear I will. I can't abear her, but I'll do it. I believe hunger has nigh drove me mad.

Mat. It takes all the madness out of me.— No, Susan; we must bear it now. Come along. We can be miserable just as well

working. There's your sleeve. I'll thread your needle for you. Don't cry—there's a dear!

Sus. I *will* cry. It's all I ever could do to my own mind, and it's all as is left me. But if I could get my claws on that lovyer o' yours, I wouldn't cry then. *He*'s at the bottom of it! I don't see myself what's the use of fallin' in love. One man's as much of a fool as another to me. But you must go to bed. You ain't fit. You'll be easier when you've got your frock off. There! Why, child, you're all of a tremble!—And no wonder, wi' nothing on her blessed body but her frock and her shimmy!

Mat. Don't take off my frock, Sue. I must get on with my work.

Sus. Lie down a bit, anyhow. I'll lie at your back, and you'll soon be as warm's a toast. (MAT. *lies down.*) O Lord! she's dead! Her heart's stopped beatin'. (*Runs out of the room.*)

A moment of silence. A tap at the door. CONSTANCE *peeps in, then enters, with a basket.*

Con. Miss Pearson!—She's asleep. (*Goes near.*) Good heavens! (*Lays her hand on her.*) No. (*Takes a bottle from her basket, finds a cup, and pours into it.*) Take this, Miss Pearson; it will do you good. There now! You'll find something else in the basket.

Mat. I don't want anything. I had so nearly got away! Why did you bring me back?

Con. Life is good!

Mat. It is *not* good. How dare you do it? Why keep a miserable creature alive? Life ain't to us what it is to you. The grave is the only place *we* have any right to.

Con. If I could make your life worth something to you——

Mat. *You* make my life worth to me!

You don't know what you're saying, miss. (*Sitting up.*)

Con. I think I do.

Mat. I will *not* owe my life to you. I *could* love you, though—your hands are so white, and your look so brave. That's what comes of being born a lady. *We* never have a chance.

Cow. Miss Pearson—Mattie, I would call you, if you wouldn't be offended——

Mat. Me offended, miss!—I've not got life enough for it. I only want my father and my mother, and a long sleep.—If I had been born rich——

Con. You might have been miserable all the same. Listen, Mattie. I will tell you *my* story—I was once as badly off as you—worse in some ways—ran about the streets without shoes to my feet, and hardly a frock to cover me.

Mat. La, miss! you don't say so! It's not possible! Look at you!

Con. Indeed, I tell you the truth. I know what hunger is too—well enough. My father was a silkweaver in Spitalfields. When he died, I didn't know where to go. But a gentleman—

Mat. Oh! a gentleman!—(*Fiercely.*) Why couldn't you be content with *one*, then?

Con. I don't understand you.

Mat. I dare say not! There! take your basket. I'll die afore a morsel passes *my* lips. There! Go away, miss.

Con. (*aside*). Poor girl! she is delirious. I must ask William to fetch a doctor. *Exit.*

Mat. I wish my hands were as white as hers.

Enter SUSAN, *followed by* COL. G. CONSTANCE *behind.*

Sus. Mattie! dear Mattie! this gentleman —don't be vexed—I couldn't help him bein' a gentleman; I was cryin' that bad, and I didn't see no one come up to me, and when

he spoke to me, it made me jump, and I couldn't help answerin' of him—he spoke so civil and soft like, and me nigh mad! I thought you was dead, Mattie. He says he'll see us righted, Mattie.

Col. G. I'll do what I can, if you will tell me what's amiss.

Sus. Oh, everything's amiss—everything! —Who was that went out, Mattie—this minute—as we come in?

Mat. Miss Lacordère.

Sus. Her imperence! Well! I should die of shame if I was her.

Mat. She's an angel, Susan. There's her basket. I told her to take it away, but she would leave it.

Sus. (*peeping into the basket*). Oh, my! Ain't this nice? You *must* have a bit, Mattie.

Mat. Not one mouthful. You wouldn't have me, Susan!

Sus. *I* ain't so peticlar (*eating a great*

mouthful). You really must, Mattie. (*Goes on eating.*)

Col. G. Don't tease her. We'll get something for her presently. And don't you eat too much—all at once.

Sus. I think she'd like a chop, sir.—There's that boy, Bill, again!—Always when he ain't wanted!

Enter BILL.

Bill (*aside to Susan*). What's the row? What's that 'ere gent up to? I've been an' had enough o' gents. They're a bad lot. I been too much for one on 'em, though. I ha' run *him* down.—And, Mattie, I've found the old gen'leman.

Mat. My father, Bill?

Bill. That's it percisely! Right as a trivet—he is!

Mat. Susan! take hold of me. My heart's going again.

Bill. Lord! what's up wi' Mattie? She *do* look dreadful.

Sus. You been an' upset her, you clumsy boy! Here—run and fetch a sausage or two, and a——

Col. G. No, no! That will never do.

Sus. Them's for Bill and me, sir. I was a goin' on, sir.—And, Bill, a chop—a nice chop. But Lord! how are we to cook it, with never a fryin'-pan, or a bit o' fire to set it on!

Col. G. You'd never think of doing a chop for an invalid in the frying-pan?

Sus. Certainly not, sir—we 'ain't got one. Everything's up the spout an' over the top. Run, Bill. A bit of cold chicken, and two pints o' bottled stout. There's the money the gen'leman give me.—'T 'ain't no Miss Lackodare's, Mattie.

Bill. I'll trouble no gen'leman to perwide for *my* family—obleeged all the same, sir. Mattie never wos a dab at dewourin', but I'll get her some'at toothsome. I favours grub myself.

Col. G. I'll go with you, Bill. I want to talk to you.

Bill. Well, I 'ain't no objection—so be you wants to talk friendly, sir.

Col. G. Good night. I'll come and see you to-morrow.

Sus. God bless you, sir. You've saved both on our lives. I *was* a goin' to drown myself, Mattie—I really was this time. Wasn't I, sir?

Col. G. Well, you looked like it—that is all I can say. You shall do it next time—so far as I'm concerned.

Sus. I won't never no more again, sir—not if Mattie don't drive me to it.

Con. (*to* Col. G.). Come back for me in a little while.

Col. G. Yes, miss. Come, Bill. *Exit.*

Bill. All right, sir. I'm a follerin', as the cat said to the pigeon. *Exit.*

Sus. I'll just go and get you a cup o' tea. Mrs. Jones's kettle's sure to be a bilin'. That's what you would like.

Exit. Constance steps aside, and Susan passes without seeing her.

Mat. Oh! to be a baby again in my mother's arms! But it'll soon be over now.

CONSTANCE *comes forward.*

Con. I hope you're a little better now?

Mat. You're very kind, miss; and I beg your pardon for speaking to you as I did.

Con. Don't say a word about it. You didn't quite know what you were saying. I'm in trouble myself. I don't know how soon I may be worse off than you.

Mat. Why, miss, I thought you were going to be married!

Con. No, I am not.

Mat. Why, miss, what's happened. He's never going to play *you* false—is he?

Con. I don't mean ever to speak to him again?

Mat. What has he done to offend you, miss?

Con. Nothing. Only I know now I don't

like him. To tell you the truth, Mattie, he's not a gentleman.

Mat. Not a gentleman, miss! How dare you say so?

Con. Do *you* know anything about him? Did you ever see him?

Mat. Yes.

Con. Where?

Mat. Once at your house.

Con. Oh! I remember—that time! I begin to—— It couldn't be at the sight of him you fainted, Mattie?—You knew him? Tell me! tell me! Make me sure of it.

Mat. To give you your revenge! No. It's a mean spite to say he ain't a gentleman.

Con. Perhaps you and I have different ideas of what goes to make a gentleman.

Mat. Very likely.

Con. Oh! don't be vexed, Mattie. I didn't mean to hurt you.

Mat. Oh! I dare say!

Con. If you talk to me like that, I must go.

Mat. I never asked you to come.

Con. Well, I did want to be friendly with you. I wouldn't hurt you for the world.

Mat. (*bursting into tears*) I beg your pardon, miss. I'm behaving like a brute. But you must forgive me; my heart is breaking.

Con. Poor dear! (*kissing her*) So is mine almost. Let us be friends. Where's Susan gone?

Mat. To fetch me a cup of tea. She'll be back directly.

Con. Don't let her say bad words: I can't bear them. I think it's because I was so used to them once—in the streets, I mean—not at home—never at home.

Mat. She don't often, miss. She's a good-hearted creature. It's only when hunger makes her cross. She don't like to be hungry.

Con. I should think not, poor girl!

Mat. Don't mind what she says, please.

If you say nothing, she'll come all right. When she's spoken her mind, she feels better. Here she comes!

Re-enter SUSAN. *It begins to grow dark.*

Sus. Well, and who have we got here?

Mat. Miss Lacordère, Sukey.

Sus. There's no lack o' dare about *her*, to come here!

Mat. It's very kind of her to come, Susan.

Sus. I tell you what, miss: that parcel was stole. It *was* stole, miss!—stole from me—an' that angel there a dyin' in the street!

Con. I'm quite sure of it, Susan. I never thought anything else.

Sus. Not but I allow it was a pity, miss!—I'm very sorry. But, bless you! (*lighting a candle*)—with all *your* fine clothes——! My! you look like a theayter-queen—you do, miss! If you was to send *them* up the spout now!—My! what a lot they'd let you have on that silk!

Con. The shawl is worth a good deal, I believe. It's an Indian one—all needlework.

Sus. And the bee-utiful silk! Laws, miss! just shouldn't I like to wear a frock like that! I *should* be hard up before I pledged *that!* But the shawl! If I was you, miss, I would send 'most everything up before that!—things inside, you know, miss—where it don't matter so much.

Con. (*laughing*) The shawl would be the first thing I should part with. I would rather be nice inside than out.

Sus. Lawk, miss! I shouldn't wonder if that was one of the differs now! Well, I never! It ain't seen! It *must* be one o' the differs!

Con. What differs? I don't understand you.

Sus. The differs 'tween girls an' ladies—girls like me an' real ladies like you.

Con. Oh, I see! But how dark it has got! What can be keeping William? I must go

at once, or what will my aunt say! Would you mind going with me a little bit, Susan?

Sus. I'll go with pleasure, miss.

Con. Just a little way, I mean, till we get to the wide streets. You couldn't lend me an old cloak, could you?

Sus. I 'ain't got one stitch, miss, but what I stand up in—'cep' it be a hodd glove an' 'alf a pocket-'an'kercher. Nobody 'ill know you.

Con. But I oughtn't to be out dressed like this.

Sus. You've only got to turn up your skirt over your head, miss.

Con. (*drawing up her skirt*) I never thought of that!

Sus. Well, I never!

Con. What's the matter?

Sus. Only the whiteness o' the linin' as took my breath away, miss. It ain't no use turnin' of *it* up: you'll look like a lady whatever you do to hide it. But never mind:

that ain't no disgrace so long as you don't look down on the rest of us. There, miss! There you are—fit for a play! Come along; I'll take care of you. Lawks! I'm as good as a man—*I* am!

Con. Good-bye then, Mattie.

Mat. Good-bye, miss. God bless you.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*The Studio.*

Enter COL. G. *Walks about restless and eager.*

Col. G. Thank heaven! If Bill has found Mr. Warren now,—— *Exit.*

Enter WARREN.

War. What can the fellow be up to? There's something odd about him—something I don't like—but it can't mean mischief when he sends for me. Where could Gervaise have picked him up?—Nobody here?

Re-enter COL. G. *and hurries to him with outstretched hand.*

Col. G. My dear sir! I am greatly obliged to you. This is very kind.

War. (*stepping back*) Excuse me.—I do not understand.

Col. G. I beg your pardon. I ought to have explained.

War. I believe something of the sort *is* necessary.

Col. G. You are my master's friend.

War. I should be proud of the honour. Can I be of any service to him?

Col. G. I believe I can trust you. I *will* trust you—I am his father.

War. Whose father? Belzebub's?

Col. G. Arthur's—your friend Gervaise's. I am Sir Walter Gervaise. You must help me to help him.

WARREN *regards him for a moment.*

War. (*stiffly*) Sir Walter, I owe your son much—you nothing yet. I am *his* friend.

Col. G. There is not a moment to lose. Listen. An old man came about the place a few weeks ago, looking for his daughter. He has been got out of the way, but I have

learned where he is: I want you to bring him.

War. I would serve your son blindfold: *you* must excuse me if I wish to understand first.

Col. G. Arthur is in trouble. He has a secret.—God forgive me!—I feared it was a bad one.

War. You don't know him as I do!

Col. G. I know him now—and can help him. Only I can't *prove* anything yet. I must have the old man. I've found his daughter, and suspect the villain: if I can bring the three together, all will come out, sure enough. The boy I sent for you will take you to the father. He will trust you, and come. (*Bell rings.*) I must go to Arthur now. *Exit.*

War. What a strange old fellow! An officer—and disguise himself!

Enter BILL.

Bill. Here you are, sir!

War. No vast amount of information in that statement, my boy!

Bill. Well, sir—here *I* are, sir.

War. That *is* a trifle more to the point, though scarcely requiring mention.

Bill. Then, here *we* are, sir.

War. That'll do—if you know what comes next?

Bill. I do, sir.

War. Go on, then.

Bill. Here goes! Come along, sir. You'll have to take a bobby, though.

War. We'll see about that. You go on.

Exeunt.

Enter GERVAISE, *followed by* COL. G.

Ger. What a time you have been, William!

Col. G. I'm sorry, sir. Did you want anything?

Ger. No. But I don't like to be left. You are the only friend I have.

Col. G. Thank you, sir. A man *must* do

his duty, but it's a comfort when his colonel takes notice of it.

Ger. Is it *all* from duty, William? Yet why should I look for more? There was a little girl I tried to do my duty by once—— My head's rather queer still, William.

Col. G. Is there nothing to be done, sir?

Ger. No; it's here—(*putting his hand to his head*)—inside.

Col. G. I meant about the little girl, sir.—I can keep dark as well as another.—When there's anything on a man's mind, sir—good *or* bad—it's a relief to mention it. If you *could* trust me—— (*A pause.*) Men *have* trusted their servants and not repented it.

Ger. No doubt—no doubt. But there is no help for me.

Col. G. You cannot be sure of that, sir.

Ger. You would help me if you could, I believe.

Col. G. God knows I would, sir—to the last drop of my blood.

Ger. That's saying much, William. A son couldn't say more—no, nor a father either.

Col. G. Oh! yes, he could, sir.

Ger. And mean it?

Col. G. Yes.

Ger. If I had a father, William, I would tell him all about it. I was but two years old when he left me.

Col. G. Then you don't remember him, sir?

Ger. I often dream about him, and then I seem to remember him.

Col. G. What is he like, sir?—in your dreams, I mean.

Ger. I never see him distinctly: I try hard sometimes, but it's no use. If he would but come home! I feel as if I could bear anything then.—But I'm talking like a girl!

Col. G. Where is your father, sir?

Ger. In India.

Col. G. A soldier, sir?

Ger. Yes. Colonel Gervaise — you must have heard of him. Sir Walter he is now.

Col. G. I've heard of *him*, sir—away in the north parts he's been, mostly.

Ger. Yes. How I wish he would come home! I would do everything to please him. I have it, William! I'll go to India. I did think of going to Garibaldi—but I won't—I'll go to India. I *must* find my father. Will you go with me?

Col. G. Willingly, sir.

Ger. Is there any fighting there now?

Col. G. Not at present, I believe.

Ger. That's a pity. I would have listed in my father's regiment, and then—that is, by the time he found me out—he wouldn't be ashamed of me. I've done nothing yet. I'm nobody yet, and what could he do with a son that was nobody—a great man like him! A fine son *I* should be! A son ought to be worthy of his father. Don't you think so, William?

Col. G. That wouldn't be difficult, sir!—I mean with most fathers.

Ger. Ah! but *mine*, you know, William! —Are you good at the cut and thrust?

Col. G. Pretty good, sir, I believe.

Ger. Then we'll have a bout or two. I've got rusty.—Have I said anything odd—or—or—— I mean since I've been ill?

Col. G. Nothing you need mind, sir.

Ger. I'm glad of that.—I feel as if—(*putting his hand to his head*). William! what could you do for a man—if he was your friend?—no, I mean, if he was your enemy?

Col. G. I daren't say, sir.

Ger. Is the sun shining?

Col. G. Yes, sir. It's a lovely day.

Ger. What a desert the sky is!—so dreary and wide and waste!—Ah! if I might but creep into a hole in a tree, and feel it closing about me! How comfortable those toads must feel!

Col. G. (*aside*). He's getting light-headed again! I must send for the doctor. *Exit.*

Ger. But the tree would rot, and the walls grow thin, and the light come through. It is crumbling now!' And I shall have to meet *her!* And then the wedding! Oh my God! (*Starts up and paces about the room.*)—It *is* the only way! My pistols, I think—yes.—(*Goes to a table, finds his keys, and unlocks a case.*)—There they are! I may as well have a passport at hand! (*Loading one.*)—The delicate thunder-tube! (*Turns it over lovingly.*) Solitude and silence! One roar and then rest! No — no rest! — still the demon to fight! But no eyes to meet and brave!—Who is that in the street?—She is at the door—with him!

Enter Col. G. *and seizes his arm.*

Ger. (*with a cry*). You've killed my Psyche! (*Goes to the clay, and lifts the cloth.*) There's the bullet-hole through her heart!

Col. G. It might have been worse, sir.

Ger. Worse! I've killed her! See where she flies! She's gone! She's gone! (*Bursts into tears.* Col. G. *leads him to the couch.*) Thank you, William. I couldn't help it. *That* man was with her. I meant it for myself.

Col. G. Who did you say was with her?

Ger. You mustn't heed what I say. I am mad. (*A knock. He starts up.*) Don't let them in, William. I shall rave if you do.

Col. G. *catches up the pistols and exit hurriedly.* Ger. *throws himself on the couch.*

Re-enter Col. G.

Col. G. (*aside*). He *is* in love with her! Everything proves it. My boy! My boy!

Ger. Father! father!—Oh, William! I was dreaming, and took you for my father! I *must* die, William—somehow. There must be some way out of this! The doors can't *all* be locked.

Col. G. There's generally a chance to be had, sir. There's always a right and a wrong fighting it out somewhere. There's Garibaldi in the field again! Die by the hand of an enemy—if you *will* die, sir.

Ger. (*smiling*) That I couldn't, William: the man that killed me would be my best friend.—Yes—Garibaldi!—I don't deserve it, though: he fights for his country; I should fight but for death. Only a man doesn't stop when he dies—does he, William?

Col. G. I trust not, sir. But he may hope to be quieter—that is, if he dies honestly. It's grand for a soldier! He sweeps on the roaring billows of war into a soundless haven! Think of that, sir!

Ger. Why, William! how you talk!—Yes! it would be grand! On the crest of the war-cataract—heading a cavalry charge!—To-morrow, William. I shall be getting stronger all the way. We'll start to-morrow.

Col. G. Where for, sir?

Ger. For Italy—for Garibaldi. You'll go with me?

Col. G. To the death, sir.

Ger. Yes; that's it—that's where I'm going. But not to-day. Look at my arm: it wouldn't kill a rat!—You saved my life, but I'm not grateful. If I was dead, I might be watching her—out of the lovely silence!—My poor Psyche!

Col. G. She's none the worse, sir. The pistol didn't go off.

Ger. Ah!—She ought to have fallen to pieces—long ago! You've been seeking to keep her shroud wet. But it's no matter. Let her go. Earth to earth, and dust to dust!—the law of Nature—and Art too.

Exit into the house.

Col. G. (*following him*) I mustn't lose sight of him.—Here he comes again, thank God!

Catches up a coat, and begins brushing it.

Re-enter GER.

Ger. I don't like to see you doing that.

Col. G. Why shouldn't I serve my own—superior, sir? Anything's better than serving yourself. And that's what every one does who won't serve other people.

Ger. You are right. And it's so cheap.

Col. G. And so nasty!

Ger. Right again, William!—Right indeed!—You're a gentleman! If there's anything I could help you in—anything gone wrong,—any friends offended—I'm not altogether without influence.

Col. G. (*aside*) He will vanquish me with my own weapons!

Ger. But you *will* go to Garibaldi with me?

Col. G. I will, sir.

Ger. And ride by my side?

Col. G. Of course.

Ger. If you ride by me, you will have to ride far.

Col. G. I know, sir. But if you would be fit for fighting, you must come and have something to eat and drink.

Ger. All right. A soldier must obey: I shall begin by obeying you. Only mind you keep up with me. *Exit, leaning on* Col. G.

Enter Thomas.

Tho. Th' dule a mon be yere! Aw're main troubled to get shut ov they reyvers! Aw'm olez i' trouble! Mine's a gradely yed! it be!—Hoy!—Nobory yere! 'T seems to me, honest men be scarce i' Lonnon. Aw'm beawn to believe nobory but mo own heighes, and mo own oud lass. *Exit.*

Re-enter Gervaise, *followed by* Col. G.

Ger. No, William; I won't lie down. I feel much better. Let's have a bout with the foils.

Col. G. Very well, sir. (*Aside.*) A little of that will go far, I know. (*Gets down the foils.*)

Ger. And, William, you must set a block up here. I shall have a cut or two at it to-morrow. There's a good cavalry weapon up there—next that cast of Davis's arm.

Col. G. Suppose your father were to arrive just after you had started!

Ger. I shouldn't mind. I don't want to see him yet. I'm such a poor creature! The heart seems to have gone out of me. You see, William——

Enter MRS. CLIFFORD.

Ger. Ah! How do you do, aunt?

Mrs. C. What's this nonsense about Garibaldi, Arthur?

Ger. Who told you?

Mrs. C. You don't mean it's true?

Ger. Quite true, aunt.

Mrs. C. Really, Arthur, you are more of a scatterbrain than I took you for!

Ger. Don't say that, aunt. I only take after my father.

Mrs. C. Don't talk to me of your father! I have no patience with him. A careless hard-hearted fellow—not worthy the name of a father! (*She glares at* SIR WALTER.)

Ger. You may go, William. (COL. G. *retires slowly.*)

Ger. Aunt, you have been a mother to me; but were you really my mother, I must not listen to such words of my father. He has good reasons for what he does, though I admit there is something in it we don't understand. (*Aside.*) If I could but understand how Constance——

Mrs. C. What do you say? What was that about Constance?

Ger. Oh, nothing, aunt. I was only thinking how difficult it is to understand people.

Mrs. C. If you mean Constance, I agree with you. She is a most provoking girl.

Ger. (*smiling*) I am sorry to hear that, aunt.

Mrs. C. I'm very glad you were never so silly as take a fancy to the girl. She would have led you a pretty dance! If you saw how she treats that unfortunate Waterfield! But what's bred in the bone won't out of the flesh.

Ger. There's nothing bred in her I would have out, aunt.

Mrs. C. Perhaps she originated her vulgarity. That is a shade worse.

Ger. *Vulgarity*, aunt! I cannot remember the meaning of the word when I think of *her*.

Mrs. C. If you choose to insult me, Arthur—— *Exit.*

Ger. It is high time I were gone! If I should be called in now to settle matters between—— William! William!—William!

Enter Col. G.

Ger. To-morrow, William. Not a word. If you will go with me, I shall be glad. If you will not, I shall go without you. *Exit.*

Col. G. Yes, sir.—I wish Warren were here with the old man. I don't know what to do till he comes.

Enter CONSTANCE.

Con. I thought my aunt was here, William.

Col. G. No, miss. She was here, but she's gone again.

Con. Could I see Mr. Gervaise for a moment?

Col. G. Certainly, miss. I'll tell him.

Con. Is he still determined on going, William?

Col. G. Yes, miss;—to-morrow, he says.

Con. To-morrow!

Col. G. Yes, miss. I think he means to start for Dover in the morning.

Con. What *am* I to do?

Col. G. What's the matter, miss?

Con. What *can* I do? I know he is angry with me. I don't quite know why. I wish I had never—— I can't help it now. My heart will break. (*Weeps.*)

Col. G. Don't let him go to Dover to-morrow, miss.

Con. He would have listened to me once. He won't now. It's all so different! Everything has gone wrong somehow.

Col. G. Do try to keep him from going, miss.

Con. He would but think me forward. I could bear anything better than have him think ill of me.

Col. G. No fear of that, miss. The danger is all the other way.

Con. What other way, William?

Col. G. He thinks you don't care a bit about him.

Exit. CONSTANCE *drops on the dais, nearly under the veiled Psyche.*

Enter GER. *and stands a moment regarding her.*

Ger. Constance.

Con. (*starting up, and flying to him with her*

hands clasped) Arthur! Arthur! don't go. I can't bear you to go. It's all my fault, but do forgive me! Oh, do, do—*dear* Arthur! Don't go to-morrow. I shall be miserable if you do.

Ger. But why, my——why, Constance?

Con. I *was* your Constance once.

Ger. But why should I not go? Nobody wants me here.

Con. Oh, Arthur! how can you be so cruel? Can it be that——? Do say something. If you won't say anything, how can I know what you are thinking—what you wish? Perhaps you don't like—— I would —I have—I won't—Oh, Arthur! do say something.

Ger. I have nothing to say, Constance.

Con. Then I *have* lost you—altogether! I dare say I deserve it. I hardly know. God help me! What can I have done so very wicked? Oh! why did you take me out of the streets? I should have been used to

them by this time! They are terrible to me now. No, no, Arthur! I thank you—thank you—with my very soul! What might I not have been by this time! But I used to lie in that corner, and I daren't now!

Enter Col. G. *behind.*

It was a happy time, for I had not offended you then. Good-bye. Won't you say one word to me?—You will never see me again.

She pauses a moment; then exit weeping—by the back door, behind the Psyche. Col. G. *follows her.*

Ger. How *could* she love that fellow? (*Looking up.*) Gone? gone! My Constance! My Psyche! I've driven her into the wild street! O my God! William! William! Constance! Which door? I won't go, Constance—I won't. I will do anything you ask me. What was that she said?—*Good-bye!* God in heaven!—William! you idiot! where are you? William!

He rushes out by the front door. Re-enter COL. G. *by the back door.*

Col. G. It was lucky I met Bill! He's after her like the wind. That message will bring her back, I think. I could trust that boy with anything! But where is he? (*Enter* THOMAS.) What, friend! here at last! Thank God! Just sit down a moment, will you? (*Peeps into the room off the study.*) He's not there! I heard him calling this moment! Perhaps he's in the house.—Did *you* leave the door open, sir?

Tho. Nay. Th' dur wur oppen. Aw seigh sombory run eawt as aw coom oop.

Col. G. My boy! my boy! It will kill him!—Stop here till I come back. (*Rushes out.*)

Tho. Aw connot stop. Aw'm tired enough, God knows, to stop anywheeres; mo yed goes reawnd and reawnd, an' aw'd fain lie mo deawn. But aw mun be gooin'. Nobory can tell what may be coomin to mo Mattie. Aw

mun go look, go look! Ha! ha! they couldn't keep mo, owd mon as aw wur! But aw wish aw hed a word wi' th' mon first.

Enter WARREN.

War. (*aside*) This must be the old fellow himself! Here he is after all! (*Peeps into the room.*)

Tho. Theer be nobory theer, sir. Th' maister's run eawt, and th' mon after him.

War. Run out!

Tho. Aw niver says what aw donnot mane. An' aw'm glad yo're theer, sir; for William he towd mo to stay till he coom back; but aw've not geet so mich time to spare; and so be's yo're a friend ov th' maister's, yo'll mebbe mind th' shop a smo' bit. Aw mun goo (*going*).

War. I say, old man—your name's Thomas Pearson—ain't it?

Tho. Yigh. Aw yer. But hea cooms to to knaw mo name?

War. I know all about you.

Tho. Ivvery body knaws ivvery body yere! Aw connot stur a fut fur folks as knaws mo, and knaws mo name, and knaws what aw be after. Lonnon is a dreedfu' plaze. Aw mun geet mo lass to whoam. Yo'll mind th' shop till th' maister cooms back. Good neet (*going*).

War. (*stopping him*) They want you here a bit. You'd better stop. The man will be back directly. You're too suspicious.

Tho. Nea, maister, thae'rt wrung theer. Aw've trusted too mich—a theawsand times too mich.

War. You trusted the wrong people, then.

Tho. It taks no mak o' a warlock to tell mo that, maister. It's smo' comfort, noather.

War. Well now, you give me a turn, and hear what I've got to say.

Tho. Yo're o' tarred wi' th' same stick. Ivvery body maks gam ov th' poor owd mon! Let me goo, maister. Aw want mo chylt, mo Mattie!

War. You must wait till Mr. Gervaise's man comes back.

Tho. (*despairingly*) O Lord! Th peack ov sunbrunt lies they ha' been tellin' me sin' aw coom yere!—childer an o'!

War. Have patience, man. You won't repent it.

Tho. What mun be, mun. Aw connot ha' patience, but aw con stop. Aw'd raythor goo, though. Aw'm noan sorry to rest noather. (*Sits down on the dais.*)

Enter BILL.

War. Here, boy! Don't let the old man go till some one comes. *Exit.*

Bill. All right, sir! Hillo, daddy! There you are! Thank God!

Tho. What fur, boy? Wull he gie mo mo Mattie again—dosto think?

Bill. That he will, daddy! You come along, an' you'll know a honest boy next time. —I can't till I see Mr. William, though.

Tho. Iv thae manes th' maister's mon yere, he's run eawt. An' aw connot goo witho. Aw'm keepin' th' shop till he coom back. An' aw dunnot mich care to goo witho. Aw dunnot mich trust tho. Th' Lord have a care ov mo! Aw dunnot knaw which to trust, and which not to trust. But aw *mun* wait for maister William, as yo co' him.

Bill. All right, daddy!—Don't you stir from here till I come back—not for nobody—no, not for Joseph!

Tho. Aw dunnot knaw no Joseph.

Bill. I'll soon let you see I'm a honest boy! As you can't go to Mattie, I'll bring Mattie to you: see if I don't! An' if she ain't the right un, I'll take her back, and charge ye nuffin for carriage. Can't say fairer than that, daddy!

Tho. Bless tho, mo boy! Dosto mane it true?

Bill. Yes—an' that you'll see, afore you're an 'alf an hour older, daddy. When Mr.

William comes, you say to him, "Bill's been. —All right."

Tho. Aw dunnot like secrets, lad. What don yo mane? Ivvery body seems to mane something, and nobory to say it.

Bill. Never you mind, daddy! "Bill's been.—All right." That's your ticket. I'm off. *Exit.*

THOMAS *gets up, and walks about, murmuring to himself. A knock at the door.*

Tho. Somebory after mo again! Aw'll geet eawt ov th' way. (*Goes behind the Psyche.*)

Enter WATERFIELD.

Wat. Nobody here! I *am* unlucky. "Not at home," said the rascal,—and grinned, by Jove! I'll be at the bottom of this. There's no harm in Gervaise. He's a decent fellow. (*Knocks at the door of* GER.'S *room.*) I won't leave the place till I've set things right—not if I've got to give him a post-obit for five

thousand—I won't!—Nobody there? (*Looks in.*) No. Then I'll go in and wait. *Exit.*

Tho. (*peeping from behind the Psyche*). That's the villain! Lord o' mercy! that's the villain! If aw're as strung as aw'm owd, aw'd scrunch his yed—aw would! Aw'm sure it's th' mon. He kep eawt ov mo way—but aw seigh him once. O Lord, keep mo hands off ov him. Aw met kill him. Aw'm sartin sure ov him when aw see him. Aw'll not goo nigh him till somebory cooms—cep' he roons away. Aw'm noan fleyed ov him, but aw met not be able to keep mo howd ov him. Oh, mo Mattie! mo Mattie! to leave thi owd faither for sich a mak ov a mon as yon! But yere cooms somebory moor. (*Goes behind the Psyche.*)

Enter MRS. CLIFFORD.

Mrs. C. No one here? She can never be in his room with him! (*Opens the door.*) Oh! Mr. Waterfield! You're here—are you?

Wat. (*coming to the door*). Mrs. Clifford! This is indeed an unexpected pleasure!

Mrs. C. Have you got Constance with you there?

Wat. I've no such good fortune.

Mrs. C. Where is she, then?

Wat. At home, I presume.

Mrs. C. Indeed she is not. I must speak to Arthur.

Wat. He's not here.

Mrs. C. Where's my—his man, then?

Wat. Taken himself off to the public-house, I suppose. There's nobody about. Odd—ain't it?

Mrs. C. I'll go and see. *Exit into the house.*

Wat. What can be the row! there is some row. *Exit into the room.*

Enter GER., *supported by* COL. G.

Col. G. Thank God! Thank God!

Ger. But where is she? I shall go mad if you've told me a lie.

Col. G. I saw her, and sent a messenger after her. We shall have news of her presently. Do have a little patience, sir.

Ger. How can I have patience? I'm a brute—a mean, selfish devil! If that fellow Waterfield was to horse-whip me—I should let him.

Tho. (*coming forward*). Theer wur that yung chap yere a while agoo, and he said aw wur to say to Maister William—what wur it aw're to say?—Yigh—it wur—"Bill's been. O'reet."

Col. G. There, sir! I told you so. Do sit down. I'll go after her.

Ger. I will. I will. Only make haste. (*Stands staring at the Psyche.*)

Tho. Th' boy said he'd be yere direckly.

Col. G. You sit down. I'll be with you presently.

Tho. (*retiring behind the Psyche*). Aw're noan likely to goo, maister.

Enter MRS. C. *Crosses to room door. Enter* WATERFIELD. *They talk.*

Ger. William! I don't want them. (*Retreats towards the Psyche.*)

Col. G. Sit here one moment, sir. (*Leads him to the dais. Advances to* MRS. C.)

Mrs. C. (*trying to pass him*). Arthur, what can——?

Col. G. (*intercepting her*). Let him rest a bit, ma'am, if you please. He's been out for the first time.

Mrs. C. At night! and in a fog! A pretty nurse you are! Poor boy!

Col. G. Mr. Waterfield, sir, would you mind stepping into the room again for a moment? (*Exit* WAT.) Mrs. Clifford, ma'am, would you please get a glass of wine for master? *Exit* MRS. C. *into the house.*

Ger. William! William!

Col. G. Yes, sir.

Ger. Send him away. Don't let him stop there. I have nothing to say to him.

Col. G. He shan't trouble you, sir. I'll take care of that. (*Goes behind the Psyche to* THOMAS, *but keeps watching the door of the room.*)—Did you see the man that went in there just now?

Tho. (*with anxiety*). He winnot joomp eawt ov th' window, dosto thenk, lad?

Re-enter MRS. C. *with wine.* GER. *drinks.*

Col. G. Why should he do that? Do you know anything about him?

Tho. Aw do.

Col. G. Has he seen you here?

Tho. No. Aw're afeard he'd roon away, and aw keepet snoog.

Col. G. I needn't ask who it is, then?

Tho. Yo needn't, lad.

Enter WATERFIELD.

Tho. Mo conscience! he'll pike eawt afoor aw geet howd on him! (*Rushes out and seizes* WAT.)

Enter MATTIE *and* BILL.

Tho. Thae'rt a domned villain! Wheer's mo Mattie?

WATERFIELD *knocks* THOMAS *down.*

Bill. O Lord! the swell's murdered old daddy!

All but GER. *rush together.* COLONEL GERVAISE *seizes* WATERFIELD. MATTIE *throws herself on her knees beside* THOMAS *and lifts his head.*

Mat. Father! father! Look at me! It's Mattie!—your own wicked Mattie! Look at her once, father dear! (*Lays down his head in despair, and rises.*) Who struck the good old man?

Bill. *He* did—the swell as give me the gold sov.

Mat. Mr. Watkins!——

Wat. I haven't the honour of the gentleman's acquaintance. I'm not Mr. Watkins. Am I now? (*to* COL. G.). Ha! ha!—Let go,

I say. I'm not the man. It's all a mistake, you see.

Col. G. In good time. I might make a worse. Watkins mayn't be your name, but Watkins is your nature.

Wat. Damn your insolence! Let me go, I tell you! (*Struggles threatening.*)

Col. G. Gently, gently, young man!—If I give your neckcloth a twist now——!

Mat. Yes, there *is* a mistake—and a sad one for me! A wretch that would strike an old man! Indeed you are not what I took you for.

Wat. You hear the young woman! She says it's all a mistake.—My good girl, I'm sorry for the old gentleman; but he oughtn't to behave like a ruffian. Really, now, you know, a fellow can't stand that sort of thing! A downright assault! I'm sorry I struck him, though—devilish sorry! I'll pay the damage with pleasure. (*Puts his hand in his pocket.*)

Mat. (*turning away*) And not a gentleman! (*Kneels by* THOMAS *and weeps.*)

Tho. (*feebly*). Dunnot greight, Mattie, mo chylt. Aw'm o' reet. Let th' mon goo. What's *he* to tho or mo?—By th' mass! aw'm strung enough to lick him yet (*trying to rise, but falling back*). Eigh! eigh! mo owd boans 'ud raythor not. It's noan blame sure to an owd mon to fo' tired o' feightin!

Mat. (*taking his head on her lap*). Father! father! forgive me! I'm all yours.—I'll go home with you, and work for you till I drop. O father! how could I leave *you* for *him?* I don't care one bit for him now—I don't indeed. You'll forgive me—won't you, father? (*Sobs.*)

Tho. Aw wull, aw do, mo Mattie. Coom whoam—coom whoam.

Mat. Will mother forgive me, father?

Tho. Thi mother, chylt? Hoo's forgiven tho lung afoor—ivver so lung agoo, chylt! Thi mother may talk leawd, but her heart

is as soft as parritch. — Thae knows it, Mattie.

Wat. All this is very interesting,—only you see it's the wrong man, and I can't say he enjoys it. Take your hand off my collar—will you? I'm *not* the man, I tell you!

Bill. All I says is—it's the same swell as guv me the skid to find her. I'll kiss the book on that!

Ger. (*coming forward*). Mr. Waterfield, on your honour, do you know this girl?

Wat. Come! you ain't goin' to put me to my catechism!

Ger. You must allow appearances are against you.

Wat. Damn your appearances! What do I care?

Ger. If you will not answer my question, I must beg you to leave the place.

Wat. My own desire! Will you oblige me by ordering this bull-dog of yours to take his

paws off me? What the devil is he keeping me here for?

Col. G. I've a great mind to give you in charge.

Wat. The old codger assaulted me first.

Col. G. True; but the whole affair would come to light. That's what I would have. Miss Pearson, what am I to do with this man?

Enter SUSAN *at the back door. Behind her,* CONSTANCE *peeps in.*

Mat. Let him go. — Father! Father! (*Kisses him.*)

Sus. That can never be Mattie's gentleman, sure-ly! Hm! I don't think much of *him.* I knew he had ugly eyes! I told you so, Mattie! I wouldn't break my heart for *him*—no, nor for twenty of him—I wouldn't! He looks like a drowned cat.

Wat. What the devil have *you* got to do with it?

Sus. Nothing. You shut up.

Wat. Well, I'm damned if I know whether I'm on my head or my heels.

Sus. 'Tain't no count which.

Bill (*aside to* Col. G.). She's at the back door, Mr. William.

Col. G. Who is, Bill? Miss Lacordère?

Bill. Right you air!

Col. G. hastens to the door. Con. *peeps in and draws back.* Col. G. *follows her.* Waterfield *approaches* Mattie.

Wat. Miss Pearson, if that's——

Mat. I don't know you—don't even know your name.

Wat. (*looking round*). You hear her say it! She don't know me!

Mat. Could you try and rise, father? I want to get out of this. There's a lady here says I'm a thief!

Tho. Nea, that she connot say, Mattie!

Thae cooms ov honest folk. Aw'll geet oop direckly. (*Attempts to rise.*) Eigh! eigh! aw connot! aw connot!

Mrs. C. If I have been unjust to you, Miss Pearson, I shall not fail to make amends.

Sus. It's time you did then, ma'am. You've murdered her, and all but murdered me. That's how your little bill stands.

Ger. (*to* WAT.) Leave the place, Mr. Waterfield.

Wat. You shall answer for this, Gervaise.

Ger. Leave the study at once.

Wat. Tut! tut! I'll make it up to them. A bank note's a good plaster.

Bill. Pleasir, shall I run and fetch a bobby? I likes to see a swell wanted.

Ger. You hold your tongue. (*Retires to the dais and sits down.* MRS. C. *follows him.*)

Wat. (*taking out his pocket-book, and approaching* MATTIE). I didn't think you'd have served me so, Mattie! Indeed I didn't! It's not kind after what's been between you and

me. (MATTIE *rises and stands staring at him.*) You've ruined my prospects—you have! But I don't want to bear malice: take that.—Old times, you know!—Take it. You're welcome. (*Forces the note on her. She steps back. It drops.*)

Mat. This *is* a humiliation! Will nobody take him away?

Sus. (*rushing at him*). You be off! An' them goggle eyes o' yours, or *I'll* goggle 'em! I can't bear the sight on 'em. *I* should never ha' taken you for a gentleman. You don't look it. You slope, I say! (*Hustles him.*)

WATERFIELD *picks up the note, and exit.*

Mat. (*bursting into tears*) Father! father! don't hate me; don't despise me.

THOMAS *tries to get up, but falls back.*

Bill. Don't be in no hurry, Daddy. There's none but friends here now—'cep' the old lady;—she do look glum.

Sus. I'll soon settle her hash!

Mat. Susie! Susie! Don't—there's a dear!

Sus. What business has she here then! She's not a doin' of nothink.

Mat. Don't you see she's looking after the poor gentleman there?

Ger. William!—William!—Gone again! What a fellow he is! The best servant in the world, but always vanishing! Call your James—will you, aunt? We must have the old man put to bed. But the poor girl looks the worse of the two! She can have the spare room, and William can sleep on the sofa in mine.

Mrs. C. I'll see to it.

Exit. GER. *goes towards* THOMAS.

Tho. Coom whoam—coom whoam, Mattie! Thi mother, hoo's cryin' her eighes eawt to whoam.

Mat. I'll run for a doctor first, father.

Tho. No, no, chylt! Aw're only a bit stonned, like. Aw'll be o' reet in a smo' bit.

Aw dunnot want no doctor. Aw'm a coomin' reawnd.

Ger. Neither of you shall stir to-night. Your rooms will be ready in a few minutes.

Mat. Thank you, sir! I don't know what I should have done with him.—Susan, you wouldn't mind going home without me? You know Miss Lacordère——

Ger. Miss Lacordère! What do you know of her?

Mat. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I oughtn't to have mentioned her. But my poor head!——

Ger. What of Miss Lacordère? For God's sake, tell me.

Enter MRS. C. *with* JAMES.

Sus. Oh, nothing, sir! nothing at all! Only Miss Lacordère has been good to us—which it's more than can be said for everybody! (*Scowls at* MRS. C. JAMES *proceeds to lift* THOMAS. *She flies at him.*) Put the old gentleman down, you sneakin' reptile! How

many doors have you been a hearkenin' at since mornin'—eh, putty-lump? You touch the old man again, and I'll mark you! Here, Bill! I'll take his head—you take his feet. We'll carry him between us like a feather.

Mat. O Susan! do hold your tongue.

Sus. It's my only weapon, my dear. If I was a man—see if I'd talk then.

James. It's a providence you ain't a man, young woman!

Sus. Right you are! Them's my werry motives. I ain't a makin' of no complaint on that score, young Plush! I wouldn't be a man for—no, not for—not even for sich a pair o' calves as yourn!

SUS. *and* BILL *carry* THO. *out.* MAT. *follows.* GER. *is going after them.*

Mrs. C. Don't you go, Arthur. They can manage quite well. I will go if you like.

Ger. They know something about Constance.

Mrs. C. Pray give yourself no anxiety about her.

Ger. What do you mean, aunt?

Mrs. C. I will be responsible for her.

Ger. Where is she then? (*Exit.* MRS. C.) William!—If he doesn't come in one minute more, I'll go after her myself. Those girls know where she is. I am as strong as a giant.—O God! All but married to that infamous fellow!—That he should ever have touched the tip of one of her fingers! What a sunrise of hope! Psyche may yet fold her wings to my prayer! William! William! —Where *can* the fellow be?

Enter COL. G. *in uniform and star, leading* CONSTANCE.

Ger. (*hurrying to meet them*). Constance! Constance! forgive me. Oh my God! You will when you know all.

Col. G. She knows enough for that already,

my boy, or she wouldn't be here. Take her —and me for her sake.

Ger. What! who——? Constance!—What does it all mean?—It must be—can it be—my father? — William — It *is* William! — William my father! — O father! father! (*throwing his arms about him*) it *was* you all the time then!

Col. G. My boy! my boy! There!—take Constance, and let me go. I did want to do something for you — but —— There! I'm too much ashamed to look at you in my own person.

Ger. (*kneeling*). Father! father! don't talk like that! O father! *my* father!

Col. G. (*raising him*). My boy! my boy! I wanted to do something for you—tried hard —and was foiled.—I doubly deserved it. I doubted as well as neglected you. But God is good. He has shamed me, and saved you.

Ger. By your hand, father.

Col. G. No—by his own. It would all

have come right without me. I was unworthy of the honour, my boy. But I was allowed to try; and for that I am grateful.—Arthur, I come to you empty-handed — a beggar for your love.

Ger. How dare you say that, father?—Empty-handed—bringing me her and yourself—all I ever longed for!—my father and my Psyche! Father, *thank* you. The poor word must do its best. I thank you with my very soul.—How *shall* I bear my happiness!—Constance, it was my father all the time! Did you know it? Serving me like a slave!—humouring all my whims!—watching me night and day!—and then bringing me——

Con. Your own little girl, Arthur. But why did you not tell me?

Ger. Tell you what, darling?

Con. That—that—that you—— Oh! you know what, Arthur!

Ger. How could I, my child, with that——!—Shall I tell you now?

Con. No, no! I am too happy to listen —even to you, Arthur! But *he* should never have—— I did find him out at last. If I had but known you did not like him! (*hiding her face.*)

Ger. (*embracing his father*) Father! father! I cannot hold my happiness! And it is *all* your doing!

Col. G. No, I tell you, my boy! I was but a straw on the tide of things. I will serve you yet though. I will be your father yet.

Bill (*aside*). Fathers ain't *all* bad coves! Here's two on 'em—good sort of old Jacobs —both on 'em. Shouldn't mind much if I had a father o' my own arter all!

GERVAISE *turns to* CONSTANCE—*then glances at the Psyche.* COL. GERVAISE *removes the sheet.* GERVAISE *leads* CONSTANCE *to the chair on the dais—turns from her to the Psyche, and begins to work on the clay, glancing from the one to the other —the next moment leaves the Psyche,*

and seats himself on the dais at CONSTANCE'S *feet, looking up in her face.* COL. GERVAISE *stands regarding them fixedly. Slow distant music.* BILL *is stealing away.*

Curtain falls.

THE END.

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